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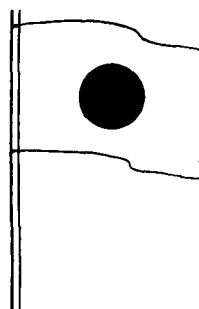
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NEXT WEEK



Japan ain't what it used to be, but Britain is learning to be more like it, anyway: reports on the Japanese at home and abroad. *Plus* the SDP get ready to tear lumps off each other — what will be left after the conference?

Socialism unpacked

LABOUR parties have retained power in Australia and New Zealand (see p6): their success, coupled with the rise of the left-of-centre New Democrats in Canada, is in miserably sharp contrast to the continued doldrums among most West European socialists. Any lessons from the Anglo diaspora for the old countries?

First lesson is that there is no lesson *in particular*. In all three countries, the parties of the right, whether in government or in opposition, have either dull or unpopular leaders, or are riven, or both. They feel themselves — especially in Canada's case — to be over-dominated by the US, and see in the parties of the left the best articulators of national independence. In the cases of New Zealand and Australia, they are heavily dependent on farm produce and or mineral exports, tied in to the Pacific rim countries economically, and offer no detailed economic or social policy guidelines for the cramped, highly industrialised, intellectually anxious societies of Western Europe.

Second lesson is that there is a lesson *in general* to be learned. In the re-election last week of Prime Minister David Lange's government in New Zealand, we saw a party with a set of economic policies commonly associated with the right, and a set of policies on nuclear power and arms commonly associated with the left come back into power with little fall in its share of the popular vote — in spite of vociferous opposition from some trade unions and from farmers.

Lange has been able to 'unpack' the traditional Labour suitcase more completely than any other left-of-centre government to date. He has felt no overpowering constraint to run a government which attempts Keynesian reflation while at the same time runs an anti-nuclear policy *and* subsidises loss-making sectors *and* bows to the wishes of its affiliated unions. In granting relative ideological autonomy to the different parts of the government package, Lange and his colleagues have been able to retain both left-wing idealism and business respect and even support. The sufferers have been organised labour and the farmers — but in New Zealand, as elsewhere, organised labour is declining; and it is an old political adage which says that kicking a man when he's down is the safest time to kick him.

It is the 'unpacking' of the issues which will most likely serve as an example to Europe's socialists. (They may take it better from sister parties across the world than they would from somewhat similar moves near at home, in the social democrat parties — where, in both Portugal, successfully, and Britain, disastrously



for the moment, ambitious men have turned their social democrat colleagues into right-of-centre free marketeers with a bit of a social conscience.) As Labour politicians in Britain are beginning to say, there may be no such thing as a socialist economic policy — in the sense that a specific set of measures can be implemented, largely unchanged, to produced certain results which benefit Labour's

constituency. The early word from John Smith, the new shadow chancellor, is that he has taken this point pretty thoroughly: not much chance of him and his advisers frightening the bourgeoisie and the Labour aristocrats with tax thresholds which are seen as worsening their living standards.

The very large danger in such socialist emulation is this: that the policies designed to catch the majority will inevitably continue to discriminate against the already-depressed economic interests of the minority, and do little more for them than the present government has done or shows signs of doing.

In 'unpacking' the old socialist suitcase, the bit that can't be thrown away is that part which insists on economic citizenship for all — which means the continued push for a more egalitarian society. This is still, uniquely, what socialism has to proclaim and offer.

The unpacking that needs to be done is the separation of this goal from other elements in the programme, which are either now seen to be unrealisable or are even inimical to the goal of greater equality itself. Trade unions can assist, but a simple reassertion of their strengths will not address the problem; public ownership is better for monopoly utilities than private, but beyond that the case has to be proved individually: the state needs to intervene more in some industrial sectors to modernise, even to save them — but it can't do much more than stand back and hope they can make it themselves. There are large reforms to be made in adapting regulations and workplaces to the needs of mothers (and to fathers too), reforms which will give some material underpinning to formal sexual equality — but no government can or should be a sexual engineer.

The left can rediscover support and impetus through a clear-eyed concentration on the fact that it cannot, even should not, attempt a programme which might usher in something which may be defined as socialism. What it might be able to do is build up support, bit by bit, for the policies which will bring into full citizenship the growing millions who are denied it. The lesson seems to be that it can be done.

John Lloyd

FESTIVAL DIARY

Edinburgh

I can tell that the Edinburgh Festival has begun when I look out of my window and see people bundling duvets out of cars. It signals the dawning of chaos. For the next three weeks whatever I do my life will be wrecked. More friends than I knew I had come to stay (five last week, six this week and four the next). More sources, contacts and campaigners seek meetings than throughout the whole of the rest of the year. There is more culture, more politics, and more alcoholic early-morning conversations than can possibly be good for anyone.

The result can only be wreckage: domestic, personal and professional. This year, for example, the household's usual laws of supply and demand have been decimated by an acute teabag and toilet roll shortage followed closely by a gross surplus of milk (I found eight pints in the fridge this morning). My resident duodenal ulcer — first conceived in the Festival three years ago — has come out of retirement for its annual August fling. Any chance of actually getting down to the month's major pressing task — the co-writing of a long-overdue paperback on nuclear power — has been shot to hell. How can anyone work in the midst of giggling guests and gently breathing duvets? Every year it's the same and every year I love it.

Not every Edinburgh resident shares my insane enthusiasm. Some escape abroad on the proceeds of renting out their flats for the month (£1,000 and upwards). Others simply ignore it. One of my neighbours, an elderly gentleman who has lived on the stair since his youth, told me that he went to see a play in 1947, the year that the whole business began, but has not been back since. 'It wasn't very interesting,' he said.

It is the time-honoured Festival traditions I love the most. The queueing, for a start. There are queues everywhere: to get tickets (or to get the information that there are no tickets), to get into shows (I don't recollect ever seeing one that started on time), to get out of shows, to get drinks at the bar and to get into the toilet (mostly at home).

There are always some tortured artistic and political rows. Already this year the Glasgow writer Alisdair Gray has taken legal action to prevent a Fringe production of his play, *The Fall of Kelvin Walker*, because of liberties that have allegedly been taken with his script. The Film Festival organisers have been severely taken to task by the Commission for Racial Equality over the advertisement that appears on the back of their programme ('No-one holds their Beck's quite like the Ceylonese'). And there has been predictably fierce controversy over plans to stage a public reading of Jim Allen's provocative play, *Perdition*.

Then there are the apocryphal best-and-worst-show-I-ever-saw stories. I was told that most of those who saw the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra at the Usher Hall last week were so thrilled that they waited around in the rain afterwards to cheer the

performers onto their coaches. I have seen opera (Stockholm Folkopera's *Magic Flute*) and theatre (Moscow Studio Theatre's *Hamlet*) which have shaken my insides in spite of the most unpropitious circumstances (a seat from which less than a third of the stage was visible and a lighting technician who seemed to operate on guesswork rather than a script).

In previous years I have also relished some real turkeys. I have been spat at in an echoing disused disco by an avant-garde American acting out his personal crisis in various lurid plastic garbs. I have watched red rubber gloves being thrown one at a time onto a stage until the cast was knee deep in them (it took quite a long time, I can tell you). There was even one infamous production years ago at the Assembly Rooms which was so offensive that someone went to the trouble of purchasing a load of rotting fish to hurl onto the stage (no, it wasn't part of the performance).

The ritual search for the most bizarre show in town is equally dear to my heart. For months after one festival I carried round a newspaper cutting describing a version of Samuel Beckett's *Not I*. It was regularly performed in Icelandic to an audience of one by a cast of one in a pitch-black hole in the ground. Last year there was a lot of fuss over a play which the audience was meant to watch by sticking their heads up through small holes in

ROGER WODDIS

Arnold Twyte

Who leaned to the Right, and caused distress to his Parents

According to a group of research scientists, political attitudes are affected less by family conditioning than by genetic factors

The Chief Defect of Arnold Twyte
Was always leaning to the Right,
A fault he showed while in his Cot
Or even sitting on the Pot.
His Mum exclaimed, 'There's Something
Wrong,
I think I've known it all along.'
His Dad said, as he rubbed his chin,
'We'd better call the Doctors in.'

Physicians came and tapped his chest,
And, having made a final test,
Proclaimed, 'The dextral way he leans
Must be inherent in his Genes.
This Rare Condition can't be cured,
He'll be the same when he's matured.'

These words, in time, proved all too true,
For Arnold's Blood was clearly Blue,
As instanced by the way he Voted,
Until one day, his Parents noted,
He showed a Moderate Tendency
To veer towards the SDP.
In Deep Relief he told his Mother,
'I'm neither One Thing nor the Other!'

the stage (there were lots of candles involved and the fire authorities closed it down). This year's prize has so far gone to the *Compagnie Di Divas* from Mexico, a group of five women and a man who romp through a somewhat heretical and immensely enjoyable rendition of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* without many clothes on, singing entirely in Old Itanish and in the process forming tableaux of famous baroque paintings.

Not surprisingly this has provoked the most treasured tradition of all: the tabloid Filth-on-the-Fringe scandal. The other essential ingredient — someone from the Mary Whitehouse school of moral philosophy to rant on about rudeness on the rates — came in the form of councillor Moira Knox, the Conservative recreation spokesperson on Edinburgh District Council. She publicly recounted how the *Sun* had telephoned to tell her that it had received 'lots' of calls from irate Edinburgh ratepayers complaining about the nudity. Had she been to see the show? 'No, I haven't seen the production myself but I don't have to. The girl from the *Sun* has seen it and she explained exactly what was going on. I mean, if this nakedness was acceptable then we would all be doing it in the streets, but we don't, do we?'

Nakedness is an unavoidable feature of one of the relatively new rituals as yet only practised by a select few — the Festival sauna. I can exclusively reveal that this year's took place in the Commonwealth Pool's sauna suite last Saturday and involved a total cast of seven. The great joy of the event is the total absence of so many of the characteristic Festival experiences. No one tries to press a leaflet into your hand, no one parades past trying to attract your attention with some strange stunt and no one tries to use the space for a theatrical performance (well not many, anyway). All you have to do is sweat.

Sweating, as it turns out, was worth rehearsing given that Edinburgh has since experienced its first ever monsoon season. Personally I put it down to the harmonic convergence of the planets on Sunday after some 23,412 years of waiting. I'm certain also that it was the associated cosmic electricians gathering at Glastonbury in Somerset and at the Callinish standing stones on Lewis that caused the computer fault which made cash dispensers throughout the city arbitrarily confiscate hundreds of Bank of Scotland keycards (including mine) instead of dispensing any much-needed tenners. As far as I am concerned the end of the Aztec calendar and the dawning of the age of Aquarius can also take responsibility for the car's flat battery, a friend's mislaid chequebook and the complete collapse of at least one Edinburgh household's sanitary system. These momentous happenings cannot all be coincidences.

Rob Edwards

Apologies to Jane Cameron, Features Editor of Fairly Serious Monthly, who co-authored last week's Diary with Adam Le Bor and whose name was omitted.

Nicaraguan conservatives tell US to go home

SEVENTY-FIVE years ago this month, US Marines under the command of Major Smedley Butler disembarked from the *USS Justin* at the Nicaraguan port of Corinto. On that occasion the US occupation of the country — in support of a conservative, pro-US regime — was to last 13 years. Its justification had been established several years earlier by Secretary of State Knox, who had accused the Nicaraguan government of violating the Monroe Doctrine by associating with an extra-continental power (Britain) and 'undermining . . . democratic institutions'.

US aid to the (conservative, pro-US) *contras*, Ambassador General Vernon Walters told the UN Security Council last year, 'is designed only to encourage Nicaragua to participate seriously and in good faith in the regional negotiations now under way'. Washington's goals 'are entirely consistent with those of the other countries in the region'. Now those countries have undermined the US argument by signing a peace pact (the 'Arias plan') with Nicaragua's ruling Sandinistas which calls, among other things, for an end to outside aid for insurgent forces.

The US attempt to subvert the pact received a boost last weekend, when Sandinista police violently broke up two opposition demonstrations; which must have had the Nicaraguan government's Washington PR consultants holding their heads in anguish. For the vastly superior propaganda resources of the United States have frequently been successfully deployed to turn attention from the illegality, not to mention immorality, of US military and economic aggression against Nicaragua, to the (usually wildly exaggerated) sins of the Sandinistas.

It is precisely the internal, unarmed opposition that the Arias plan requires the Sandinistas to accommodate. Talks have already been held with the 11 opposition parties (most of them hostile to the *contras*) and the Catholic Church in the person of Archbishop Obando y Bravo. One of the government's most outspoken critics, even Obando was moved to remark that 'it could be a door opening to peace . . . we must work sincerely and in good faith'.

Unlike El Salvador, where the opposition coalition seeks a fundamental change in the structure of power, most of the complaints of the Nicaraguan parties could be dealt with by an end to the state of emergency. In one form or another, emergency powers have been in place since 15 March 1982, and they will not be revoked — as President Ortega reiterated after signing the Arias plan — until the US calls off the *contras*.

The new constitution, which came into force on 10 January this year, was approved overwhelmingly by all seven parties in the National Assembly, from Conservatives and Liberals to Marxist-Leninists. It guarantees a multi-party system and a mixed economy, along with freedom of speech, worship and assembly, and bans prior censorship of the press. In response to widespread opposition concern, the Sandinista Army, while retaining its name ('in honour of

Sandinista', the 1930s guerrilla leader), is clearly stated to have 'a national character' and is required to 'protect, respect and obey the present political constitution'.

In formal terms, perhaps the only worrying aspect of the constitution is that it does not exclude presidential re-election; a highly sensitive issue in a country which has been plagued by the Latin American disease of *continuismo*.

Sadly, however, the new constitution had been in force for only a few hours before at least ten key articles — including the rights to strike and demonstrate and freedom of information — were suspended. A few months later, after the US House of Representatives had voted in favour of \$100 million in aid for the *contras*, the government closed down the only opposition newspaper, *La Prensa*, and expelled a priest and a bishop sympathetic to the *contras*.

The government can point to the fact that it is fighting a war of national survival, and argue that under international law the derogation of certain civil rights is allowed in such circumstances. But a recent report by the human rights monitor Americas Watch, while noting the absence of disappearances and of what is generally understood as torture, remarked that 'most of [the government's] repressive acts do not bear the direct relationship to [the military] threat that would make them permissible under international law'.

A great deal hinges on the credibility of Sandinista assurances that an end to the war would bring the restoration of civil rights. The often reiterated US position is that the Sandinista government is untrustworthy. It is said to have violated its 1979 promise to the Organisation of American States that it would hold elections and establish a broadly representative, democratic government; and to harbour an expansionist ideology, as demonstrated in the so-called 'Beyond our Borders' speech by interior minister Tomas Borge in 1981.

These arguments, when examined closely, do more damage to the credibility of Washington than that of Managua. Whatever the imperfections of the 1984 elections, the available evidence suggests that the Nicaraguan government commands at least as much popular support as President Reagan; while the US version of the Borge speech (as former US envoy Wayne Smith pointed out in a recent issue of *Foreign Policy* magazine) 'shamelessly misrepresents' the truth.

More telling are the comments of the internal opposition leaders themselves. In an interview at the end of last year, Dr Humberto Guzman of the Popular Social Christian Party 'categorically condemned' US backing for the *contras* as 'an interference in the internal affairs of Nicaragua' and as 'absolutely counter-productive'. He described the present state of democracy in the country as 'a starting point' and — asked if the Sandinistas sought a one-party state — replied that 'that opportunity has passed'.

Independent Liberal leader Dr Virgilio Godoy told a meeting of opposition parties held last month in Madrid: 'If opposition and government reached an agreement in Nicaragua as we proposed, no external force would be capable of threatening peace in our country.'

One may legitimately harbour doubts as to

whether, for example, Sandinista TV would ever give air time to a political campaign broadcast by the man usually referred to simply as 'el traidor', Sandinista hero turned *contra* leader Eden Pastora. The former 'Comandante Cero' has expressed a wish to return to Nicaragua. More to the point, such a political opening is impossible so long as the United States clings to its dream of removing the Sandinistas from power — or at least depriving them of the effective exercise of that power.

The resignation last week of special envoy Philip Habib, whose inclination to give the Arias plan a chance was clearly out of tune with Administration sentiment, was perhaps the clearest indication that this remains the preferred option. Depressing as it may be, the question remains not whether the peace plan will work, but who will be blamed for its failure.

Phil Gunson

Scots Labour rethink

LABOUR could be in for a bout of constitutional in-fighting over the need for the devolution of power within the party organisation if suggestions being put to a major labour movement conference in Edinburgh at the end of the month gain widespread acceptance. There are also signs of incipient frustration among activists at the performance to date of Labour's Scottish front bench team coupled with some interesting new thinking from the left on how the campaign for a Scottish Assembly could form part of the new model people's party.

In a Labour Co-ordinating Committee (LCC) position paper for the 29 August conference, organised by the LCC in conjunction with the Labour Campaign for a Scottish Assembly, several leading Labour officials including Bill Speirs, the Scottish Party chairperson, Mark Lazarowicz, the leader of Edinburgh District Council, and Michael Connarty, the leader of Stirling District Council, are now arguing for a major campaign to win home rule for the Scottish Party. They highlight the absurdity of a situation where issues such as colour of the office wallpaper and who occupies what office have to be referred to Walworth Road. The answer, they say, is for the Scottish Party to secure its own financial base and to reform its conference so that it can actually make Scottish policy. However much some may baulk at the prospect of more constitutional wrangles, the logic of devolving power to the Scottish Party as a means of helping gain power for the Scottish people is irrefutable.

The paper's suggestion that there is a need to strengthen Labour's parliamentary performance is not an implicit attack on the Shadow Scottish Secretary Donald Dewar. In spite of his new nickname 'Donald Durex', he has won respect from all sides of the party since the election for apparently abandoning some of his characteristic caution. It is the others in his team such as John Home Robertson (Home Affairs) and Norman Hogg (Health, Education and Social Work) who are beginning to cause concern.

The paper also attempts to develop some arguments that might appeal to the party in the south. By outlining a kind of autonomist philosophy linking the need for new economic

policies with the need for more decentralisation of power throughout Britain, it argues that Labour could radically challenge the current national power structure. Integrating devolution for Scotland, it says, is a good way of ensuring that Labour's redefinition of itself is not simply aimed at Home County yuppies.

Rob Edwards

Why Labour won down under

Wellington

ON ANY NORMAL British assessment this was the election Labour should have lost. Large numbers of New Zealanders believe themselves to be significantly worse off today than they were when David Lange led Labour to power in 1984.

Annual inflation is close to 20 per cent, mortgage rates are around 23 per cent, overdrafts cost 32 per cent, there is massive discontent among the farming community caused by cuts in subsidies and a high exchange rate, blue-collar trade unions have disaffiliated from the party and advised their members not to vote Labour. There is worry over rising crime, a widening gap between rich and poor, with the well-off going in for some conspicuous consumption. All these factors could have combined to make this another one-term administration, like Labour's three previous governments since the war.

Did Labour win because it fought a better campaign than its National Party opponents? Not really. Before the election got under way, opinion polls put Labour 26 per cent ahead. This lead narrowed to 4 per cent a week before polling, and the final result had it less than 3 per cent in front. Party officials told me that they wanted to keep the campaign boring, and there were certainly occasions when Lange appeared irritated by the need to press the flesh and meet voters.

But Lange's later television performances were impressive. By contrast National Party leader Jim Bolger (its third in three years — there is a lot of blood lying on that party's carpet) seemed pedestrian and opportunistic. His attempt to play the law and order card misfired badly — especially a disgraceful promise to hold a referendum on the death penalty made in the aftermath of a gruesome schoolgirl murder.

It was the economy which mattered most as an issue, and the way it has handled it shows why the New Zealand Labour Party is so interesting. Labour activists are upset when you murmur 'Thatcherite monetarism' to describe policies which push up interest rates, cut government subsidies, remove exchange controls, privatise state industries, reduce the top rates of personal taxation from 66 to 48 per cent and add enormously to inflation by the imposition of a 10 per cent sales tax on everything (food, books, newspapers, children's clothes, fuel bills, fares in addition to all the goods and services which are subject to VAT in the UK).

The political effect of these policies, which are identified in the minds of the public and the media with Finance Minister Roger Douglas and are described as 'Rogernomics', has been startling. On the one hand trade unions are disenchanted. The miners disaffiliated from the party they

helped to found 70 years ago, after redundancy notices were issued to half their members, and during the election campaign the president of the Public Service Association (the New Zealand equivalent of the GMB) said at its annual conference that 'the government's broken promises and its contemptuous casting aside of normal procedures and rights mean that the PSA cannot know what the Labour Party stands for'.

The National Union of Railwaymen's journal on 1 August said it could not advise members how to vote. 'The Labour Party, as we supported it, is dead if not buried, and in its place we have a party using the name but no longer being guided by those who formed it.'

But thanks to Rogernomics Labour has new supporters. Three days before polling, the *National Business Review* (a sort of mini *Financial Times*) explained the dilemma for the citizens of Auckland ('the city where there are more property developers than in post-war Hiroshima, and more BMWs than in downtown Munich').

Some are taking this election so seriously that they are contemplating doing something they have been advised against since their names were first put down for Kings or St Cuthberts [the Kiwi equivalents of Eton and Roedean]. Despite promising Aunt Edith and Uncle George they would never do it, they are going to vote for the other lot. Them, that is — as opposed to Us. Yes, these desperate souls are going to vote for Our Roger. If the Nats get back in, the share portfolio could lose so much value that they would have to scrap the plans to buy the decaying bungalow next door and turn it into a tennis court.

One effect of this change round has been that only 10 per cent or so of Labour's income now comes from the trade unions — party officials were astonished by the success of their appeal for funds to corporate and business interests, and their generosity allowed the party to spend heavily on press and television advertising. Although less professional than the Kinnock/Gould/Mandelson standard, most of Labour's broadcasts were crisp and well put together, and the press ads had the same thudding effect as the Tories' big spending had in the last week of Britain's election campaign.

Naturally, the government's efforts to get the economy on to a sound footing featured heavily: the wording of the final whole page press advertisement was 'Don't throw away three years hard work in three seconds. Come forward with us. Labour. Let's finish the job.' (All in huge capital letters.)

But a recurring theme — and the subject of by far the best broadcast of the entire election — was Labour's anti-nuclear policy. The refusal to allow American nuclear warships into its harbours, and the establishment of New Zealand (in Lange's words) as a 'nuclear-free zone' (there are no nuclear power stations either) was by far the most significant foreign policy initiative of the Lange government, and one which enjoyed enormous popular support. This was the issue which, according to party president Margaret Wilson, 'provided the cement which kept the party together.' For 15 years the left of the NZ Labour Party has been working for such a policy, and any hint of backsliding by party spokespeople was resisted by barrages of protest messages. It ensured that the youth, peace and women's movements (the latter have great influence in NZ

politics) worked tirelessly for Labour's re-election. It also ensured that Labour enjoyed more middle-class support in 1987; that, with the Yuppie effect in the prosperous parts of Auckland, cut heavily into National's traditional following. The Nats may have picked up some votes from disaffected blue-collar workers, but more probably abstained — there were big swings against Labour in safe seats.

Despite monetarism, Labour's record on unemployment is good, with the number out of work well below what it was at the end of Muldoon's regime. And an important cushion for low-income families has been the introduction of minimum income guarantees against the inflationary consequences of the General Sales Tax.

If Rogernomics work, and prosperity is restored, disaffected Labour voters should return to the fold, and the next election should be easier for Labour to win than this one was. The achievement of the Lange government in winning an unprecedented second term should not be underestimated, and while it may be a little soon for David Lange to claim that not only has Labour 'broken the mould, the pieces are already on their way to the furnace', there is no doubt that New Zealand is now a very different country from that which existed until 1984.

Richard Faulkner

Richard Faulkner is head of a UK government relations consultancy, Camden Associates.

The record of the song of the book

THE ATTORNEY General will soon have to decide whether acts of public *singing* about Peter Wright's revelations of dirty tricks and treachery in MI5 should henceforth be banned. A recording of *Ballad of a Spycatcher*, with Billy Bragg, songwriter Leon Rosselson and folk rock group the Oyster Band, will be on sale throughout Britain by the end of the month. Leon Rosselson's ballad, which was commissioned for and printed by the *New Statesman* two weeks ago (7 August), has not (as yet) attracted retaliation from the Treasury Solicitor — despite mentioning Wright's riveting account of Operation P*g!*t, and quoting extracts from the book about how Wright and fellow MI5 officers *ug*ed and *ur*le* their way across London. It thus directly contravenes the House of Lords' much-derided judgment prohibiting the publication either of extracts or summaries of *Spycatcher* in Britain. (Meanwhile Wright's book has become America's number one hardback bestseller, and will soon have sold over a quarter million copies in the US alone.)

The launch of the *Spycatcher* record, on the Topic label, follows Leon Rosselson's first public performance of the song at a London public meeting two weeks ago. At the meeting, organised by the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, extracts were read to the audience by Rik Mayall, Michael Palin and Terry Jones from the *Monty Python* show, and by *Spitting Images*' Margaret Thatcher puppet.

Disc jockeys and radio producers responded in contrasting ways to news of the release. A team from London's independent Capital Radio this

week rushed to cover the recording of Britain's first ever security-suppressed song. But at Broadcasting House, John Walters, producer of Radio One's John Peel programme, said that although he would obtain a copy of the *Spycatcher* record as soon as it was available, he expected that playing of the record would be restricted on the BBC while the issues raised were 'referred upward'.

Duncan Campbell

Advance orders for the Spycatcher single may be placed with the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, 9 Poland Street, London W1. Tel: 01-437 2795.

Renovate or fade away?

Paris

THE FRENCH Communist Party has already selected its candidate for the presidential elections next May, but voters may yet have to choose between an official Communist hopeful and a rebel. The official candidate is André Lajoinie, a peasant's son and one of the last party apparatchiks to spend a year in Moscow to study Marxist ideology. His possible rival, Pierre Juquin, once the party's spokesperson and now leader of a reformist faction inside the party, could be driven to stand without party backing as a last resort.

If he did decide to stand, Juquin would change his faction, the self-styled 'renovators', into a force outside the party. That is not how the 'renovators' started out. The movement was born out of disagreement with the analysis made by the party's 25th Congress, held in 1985, of its inexorable decline. Philippe Robrieux, historian of the Communist Party, says it can today claim only 120,000 paid-up members — once France's largest party, the Communists now have fewer members than even the Gaullist RPR (Rassemblement Pour la République). And the party made a disastrous showing in the 1984 European elections — only 11.1 per cent of the vote, its poorest score since the liberation.

The 25th Congress put the blame squarely on the party's alliance with the Socialists, the 'Union of the Left' which had prevailed on and off for the last quarter of a century. 'We made a mistake and we deceived the French' was the verdict of party leader Georges Marchais, who became Secretary General when the party was scoring above 20 per cent in 1972. He has seen it decline ever since. What the party needed, said Marchais, was a return to its roots, a new emphasis on building up a working-class movement, and a move away from co-operation with the Socialist Party — a tactical shift *Le Monde* called 'the return to the ghetto'.

Not all Communists at the Congress were happy with the spectacular U-turn in strategy. According to Marchais' own conservative estimate, 5 per cent of them disapproved — some of these joined the ranks of the 'renovators', but others joined too. The result is a group of which Marchais has to take account, although it is a minority, because it challenges the principle of democratic centralism on which his party is structured. The principle prohibits any co-ordination between members other than through the party hierarchy — the Communist 'cells' — with the leadership in

absolute control. In the leadership's eyes, Juquin has violated that principle in at least two ways: by setting up a nationwide grouping of 'renovators' and by publishing a manifesto earlier this year. The manifesto, apart from condemning the leadership as defeatist, sectarian and opportunist, calls for a regrouping of the left around Communists and left-wing Socialists, and paints a portrait of the Soviet model much less idolatrous than that adopted by the French party leadership.

The publication of the manifesto is only one of the signs of widespread disaffection with the leadership's retrenchment. In late January, Claude Poperen resigned from both the Central Committee (the party's 'parliament') and from the Politburo — the first resignation by a Politburo member since the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Poperen, who first got himself into trouble for criticising the leadership in the aftermath of the 1984 European elections fiasco, resigned in protest at Marchais' denunciation of the 'renovators' as 'liquidators' of the party. Shortly afterwards, Marcel Rigout, a symbol of the period of collaboration with the Socialists (he had served as Adult Education minister in the coalition government of 1981-83) also resigned from the Central Committee, with nothing to show for his many calls for broad discussion within the party. Juquin himself resigned from the Central Committee in June, his attempt to start a debate inside the party on the arguments of his manifesto defeated.

André Lajoinie, head of the Communist parliamentary group for the past seven years, has been a member of the party since the age of 19. He has a reputation for hard work and obstinacy. He dismisses those who resigned as 'a small minority which does not worry us, because the party is strong enough to tolerate critics'. He points to his selection as 'presidential candidate of all Communists' as evidence of the trend in the party towards 'homogenisation'.

According to a survey carried out by France's leading polling organisation, SOFRES, to coincide with the candidate selection, 55 per cent of Communist voters agree with the arguments of the 'renovators', and 40 per cent want Juquin to stand as a candidate in the presidential elections next year. If Juquin did decide to stand without party backing, 2 per cent of the whole electorate would vote for him, and 4 per cent would vote for Lajoinie — Marchais scored 15 per cent in the first ballot when he ran for president in 1981. The poll also sheds some light on what Communist voters think of the 25th Congress' move away from governmental co-operation with the Socialists: in the event of a Socialist president being elected, 66 per cent of Communist voters would like to see the leadership accept an offer of ministerial posts.

Marchais' immediate aim is to have his party appear united at the next Congress in December. Beyond that, he must find a way to reverse the downward trend: in 40 years, the Communist Party has lost more than half its electorate. Today the Communist Party is France's fifth political force, overtaken by the extreme-right National Front. According to SOFRES polls, 40 per cent of National Front voters are former Communist or Socialist voters. Marchais' task is not made easier by having backed a relatively unknown candidate for '88: in another recent poll, more than half of French voters said they had never heard of

Lajoinie.

Juquin is still hesitating. If he does decide to run for president, François Platone, a writer on the Communist Party, says his aim would be to achieve a high enough score relative to Lajoinie — high enough to demonstrate there is widespread support for the 'renovators' and perhaps to bring about more resignations.

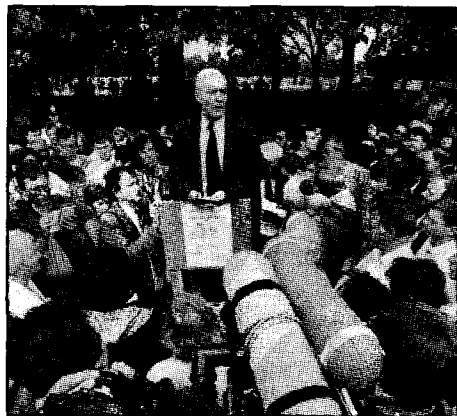
Whatever Juquin and his 'renovators' decide to do, the Communist Party leadership will not go back on its renunciation of expulsions as a way of dealing with persistent disagreement. But Marchais may opt for another formula: the 'renovators' and others like them will have 'put themselves outside the party, by their own actions' — self-expulsion, in other words. The liquidators will then have been liquidated.

John Follain

If the caption fits No 31



Nnnngoooph! Madonna minder, 16-stone Clay Tave, puts the knee into a paparazzo last week. Captions, thinks bubbles and sound effects to reach the Perseverance Depot by Tuesday 1 September. Ten-pound book token to be won. If you wannabuy records, pay for them out of your own money.



No 29: winner

Tony Benn: 'So in the event of a real fire, this is where we all congregate.' (*John Wright, Pontypridd.*) Runners up: 'Listen very carefully. I shall say this only once.' (*Katie Mallett, Canvey Island.*) 'Put that cigarette out over there. This is a no-smoking meeting.' (*Leonora Casement, London SW17.*)

Staying on — the Arabs of France

Paris

AT 10.15pm every Friday evening throughout the summer a train leaves the Austerlitz station in Paris heading for the southern Spanish coast and on into Northern Africa. On it are *Les Arabs Francaises*, the mass summer exodus of the thousands of Algerian and Moroccan immigrants whose legal and illegal labour supports much of this city's infrastructure.

There are over 4 million immigrants in France, half of them Muslims from North Africa. This is their annual pilgrimage home. They crowd eight to a carriage for the three-day journey that takes them through four countries and two continents. They'll make the return journey in a month's time; for some a return to the kitchens and tables of couture Paris, for others to blue-collar jobs in the industrial heartlands of France.

Ahmad Mukra is travelling to Oran, Algeria's shambolic second city. He works, like so many of his fellow immigrants, for around £65 for a 50-hour week in a car factory in Paris. The family live in the grimy suburb of Aubervilliers on the outskirts of the city, in purpose-built municipal blocks that smell of cheap disinfectant and boiled vegetables. Their neighbours are all Arabs: a close, insular, self-supporting community that cares little for the French world outside its walls.

He came to France 18 years ago with a valid work permit. 'I worked at what jobs there were,' he says nervously in broken French. 'I send money home to family, and I don't see my brothers and sisters for many years. Then I go back to Algeria and wed and my wife joins me here 12 years ago.'

He is especially worried for his children. Their position in France remains nebulous. At the end of last year the Chirac government, in a move designed to appeal as much to the extreme right as to curb actual immigration levels, proposed a controversial series of changes in the French Code of Nationality. A person born of immigrant parents in France would no longer have an automatic right to French citizenship once they became 18 years old. Instead, they would have to apply for citizenship between the ages of 16 and 23 and submit themselves to a series of tests designed to gauge their suitability. (By contrast, the 1981 British nationality law allows that children born in Britain to non-British parents are automatically entitled to British citizenship as long as the parents

are legally resident here). The law was put aside after fierce protests: most expect it to come back.

It is this feeling of apprehension that is causing most concern to the Arab immigrants like Ahmad. They remain unsure of their legal position here, frightened of the police and in many cases unwilling to come forward and receive even the most basic benefits to which they are entitled.

With the French presidential election campaign set to take off towards the end of this year, the plight of immigrants will assume enormous significance here. In 1988, immigration will be a rallying issue for both the left and right in France, similar to the way their colleagues 30 years ago polarised around the immediate problems of the dissolution of the French Empire. The more they try to close their eyes to the problem, the more it returns to haunt them.

M. Le Pen's National Front has already gained considerable strength by exploiting latent racism among blue-collar workers resentful of Arab cheap labour on the one hand, and from the French upper classes who see these people as the reason they lost the Empire on the other. The incidence of racial attacks on Arabs living in France has increased alarmingly over the last year. In the southern cities of Marseilles and Nice, and in Lyon, there are reports of thugs shooting wildly into Arab bars and indiscriminate sexual attacks on Arab women. In the northern city of Lille, tension between Arabs and French is set to turn ugly. One British resident in Paris who visited Lille recently said: 'There is a sense that things are set to boil over and take a very violent turn for the worse.'

Man Lunef, a furnace hand from Lille, 19 years in France, disembarks at Bechar, the ex-military camp at the northern edge of the Saoura, the Western part of the Algerian Sahara. His real home is a rambling mud and wood encampment to the east of this arid town set on a vast plain. The walk from the station takes him past the old schoolhouse where many years ago French teachers beat a foreign language into him. Bechar is also the place where the first French-designed miniskirt was worn in North Africa.

Today, that language and that culture are still part of a nation and a people who in many ways have freed themselves from colonialism in name only. To Lunef and his family, to the friends he has been with for the last three days as they tumbled through Europe and North Africa, little has changed. For them, *Les Arabs Francaises* remain enslaved.

Paul Palmer

Who is that girl?

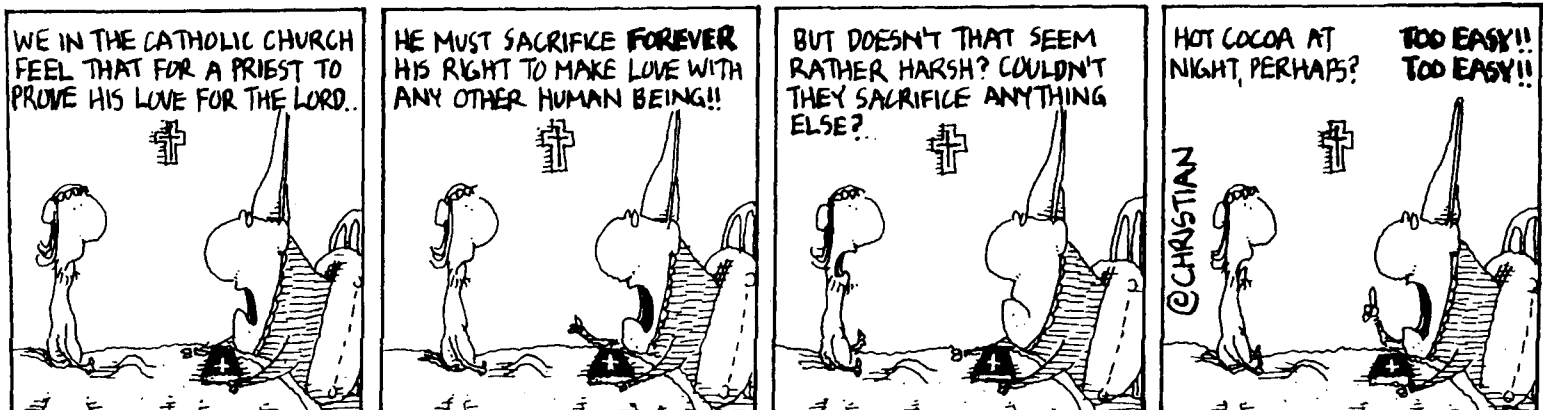
THE QUESTION most often asked of a star is: what is the secret of her/his success? But the *substance* of stardom revolves around this question never being answered. Every exposé heightens mystique. The more that is told, the bigger the secret grows.

This is why Madonna's status as an enigma grows in proportion to her fame, but in fact there is little mysterious about her success. Pornography sales in the USA yearly top film and record sales combined, so working in the pop/porn borderline could be expected to pay off. Madonna's much vaunted ambition might be misleading. Ambition can be an armour that protects from fame, as much as a fuel that drives you there. After the initial splash of some rude songs and videos the press has taken up Madonna's case to re-examine it ad infinitum. That's what stardom is: the mass media in the process of trying to understand its own workings.

Although Madonna is *not* really mysterious, she is really contradictory. On tour she comes on strong and sexual to the crowd and they are always reputed to go wild. But half those screaming as Madonna tosses her knickers offstage are young women. Where does Madonna's sexual hard sell touch them? Clearly, they are getting off on being ignored. A core of Madonna's followers have always been girls but she always plays to men. This makes her an attractive idol for girls because it is very normal behaviour and the fans are at an age when being normal is a lifetime's ambition. Although girl fans and Madonna each know girls are crucial to her success, each side is committed to obscuring this fact to enhance their respective auras of heterosexuality. Being normal in this case demands that when Madonna purrs 'touch me' hundreds of girls must scream in bliss.

Julie Burchill reckons Madonna is a good thing. But for whom? The idea that she has bred confidence into her girl fans has been exaggerated. When Madonna uses the body-language of soft-porn, she is protected by the glare of the spotlights. In shadowier places more protection is needed (fans cannot afford bodyguards). But Madonna is not 'leading' her girl fans anywhere. On the contrary, she herself is being swept along by the roaring tide of an attempt by some girls and women to reappropriate male-designed female images, pornographic clichés for example, for themselves. A shifting and shuffling is now going on as to what the meanings of this sort of sexiness are, and Madonna finds herself right at the heart of it.

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KEN LIVINGSTONE

Me and the *New Statesman*: the litmus test of socialist unity

WHILE I AM used to reading vicious, dishonest attacks on my politics and personality in the press, I was amazed to see such smear journalism in the *New Statesman*. Brian Wilson's article in the 7 August issue was no more than an upmarket version of the *Sun*'s 'most odious man in Britain'. If Brian believed what he wrote then why not raise it with me on one of the many occasions we have both been in parliament? This would have avoided the inaccuracies in his article.

I could have explained that I have spoken for hundreds of local Labour parties in safe Tory seats — although I concentrated on marginals in the 12 months before the election. I could have shown him that far from 'zealously maximising my own media earnings' I turned down £40,000 from the *Sunday Times* who wanted to serialise my book, and that I use any of my extra income for political purposes.

Nor have I accused Labour MPs of 'inhabiting wine bars and brothels'. This is sheer fabrication of the media. As a professional journalist Brian will know I am not responsible for the misleading headlines on articles. My February article attacked Tory MPs and he can verify the incident on 'brothels' to which I was referring, which played no small role in the fight against the GLC's abolition, by turning to page 273 of my book.

I could go on but I have been in politics long enough to know that this type of issue is always used to divert attention from real political choices. So it is the real political differences with the *New Statesman* that I will deal with.

Since the election, the *New Statesman*, in particular its editor John Lloyd and political editor Peter Kellner, have argued that Labour must abandon hope of forming a majority government and orient to coalition with the Liberals or merged Alliance party. To make such a coalition possible the soft left must realign with the right of the party. According to a *bon phrase* of Peter Kellner's: 'If Neil Kinnock, John Smith, David Steel and Paddy Ashdown were to sit down together with some bottles of good wine for a long summer afternoon in the hills of Tuscany, there is much they would agree on.'

The realignment within Labour between right and soft left is, allegedly, well underway: 'The Labour Party seems to be in the throes of a realignment of its own; between the soft left and the right . . . The party is no longer producing stars whose politics are fundamentally different from those of Mr John Cunningham, Mr Roy Hattersley or Mr John Smith.' (John Lloyd, *Financial Times*, 6 July.)

While the *New Statesman* recognises that leaders of the soft left and right remain unconvinced that Labour must orient towards an agreement with the Liberals, it emphasises that 'the new Tribunes are not at all hostile in principle to opening a quiet dialogue with the Alliance'. (John Lloyd and John Rentoul, *New Statesman*, 17 July.)

FROM this perspective the soft left can make

agreements with David Steel — with Owen is more ambiguous — but not with Tony Benn. Thus John Lloyd: 'The break of principle in non-Conservative party politics appears to be between the "hard" left and the rest.' (*New Statesman* 26 June.) And: 'It is becoming clear there is a broad identity of political view stretching from the jagged fissure between the Campaign and Tribune groups of the Labour Party to the equally jagged fissure in the Alliance.' (*Financial Times*, 6 July.)

We now come to the internal Labour Party aspect. As rightly noted by Peter Kellner, 'there are two tendencies within the Tribune Group. The first seeks a fresh alignment within the Labour Party, from serious left to centre right. Tribune's second tendency still believes in the unity of the left.' (*New Statesman*, 3 July.)

The problem for Peter Kellner is that it is *not* just in the Tribune Group there are 'two

‘Labour must retain the perspective of a majority Labour government — achieved through pushing back, not rehabilitating, the Alliance’

tendencies' — those seeking unity with the right and those seeking a principled basis for unity on the left. I quote a Labour Co-ordinating Committee (LCC) Executive resolution of 25 July — which I strongly support: 'We re-affirm our commitment to building unity on the left where this is consistent with LCC policies and strategy, and regret the decision of the Tribune Group to reject a joint slate with the Campaign Group (for the shadow cabinet). It remains LCC's desire to see a merger of the two into a single broad left grouping in the Parliamentary Labour Party. The LCC distinguishes itself from those on the "soft left" who appear to favour the alternative of an alliance with the party's centre-right. Furthermore we completely reject as neither desirable nor practical an agreement with the Alliance.'

THE *New Statesman* endorsed the Tribune Group's vote against a joint slate for the shadow cabinet, but *Tribune*'s editorial noted: 'Those who rejected the joint slate are moving, some slowly, some more quickly, outside the traditions of the paper.' Peter Hain, a member of the LCC Executive, has stated bluntly that 'the suggestion of a Lib-Lab pact should be rejected outright', publicly attacked *Marxism Today* and the *New Statesman* for advocating it, and argued: 'A very dangerous thing happened in the Tribune Group. People are looking for an accommodation with the right.' Moves are currently afoot to make clear the opposition of members of both 'hard' and 'soft' left to any coalition with the Alliance and to

develop unity on the left.*

Such a perspective of a united left is anathema to the *New Statesman* because it is inimical to its political perspective. Peter Kellner even claimed the Tribune Group's rejection of a joint slate for the shadow cabinet was a matter of 'principle'!

There is no objection to the *New Statesman* arguing its political viewpoint. But others have the right to point out its errors.

As regards the real role, as opposed to *New Statesman* dreams, of a Labour-Liberal coalition I could put it no better than Joe Rogaly in the *Financial Times*: 'Mr Neil Kinnock should now invite the Liberals . . . to join his Labour opposition in a grand alliance . . . If he does, they will do well to accept — on terms . . . Some people will protest that the net effect would be to reverse the Thatcher revolution. The truth is that entirely the opposite would have happened: mainstream political debate would at last centre around a general acceptance of both markets and capitalism.' Liberal terms for coalition include continuation of the essentials of the existing Tory framework of trade union law, maintenance of privatisation and a nuclear defence policy — by 1991, in practice, Trident. Such a coalition would not *overturn* but *institutionalise* Thatcherism.

It logically parallels Peter Kellner's rehabilitation of the policies — if not tactics — of Dr Owen: 'The ideas that Dr Owen first espoused in 1984 deserve a better fate than to be cremated alongside his political ambitions.' (*Independent*, 6 July.)

Finally Kellner has made clear his perspective for such a Labour-Liberal agreement: 'The Labour Party would have to abandon all hope of ever governing alone again. Is that not merely an abrupt way of stating what many of us feel in our bones to be true, but are reluctant to admit?' (*New Statesman*, 19 June.)

Which brings us back to Brian Wilson. The answer is 'no', I don't feel this in my bones. Labour must retain the perspective of a majority Labour government — but it must be achieved through pushing back, not rehabilitating, the Alliance.

The relation to the internal situation in the Labour Party is clear. Everyone knows that there are three currents inside the party — right, soft left, and hard left. The *New Statesman* believes the right and soft left should work together in the final perspective of coalition with the Liberals. I believe in unity on the left and a majority Labour government. The differences with the *New Statesman* are rather self-evident. □

Ken Livingstone is Labour MP for Brent East. His book, If Voting Changed Anything, They'd Abolish It, is published by Collins on 7 September. An extract will appear in the NS on 4 September.

*A 'unity' statement signed by leading members of the 'soft' and 'hard' lefts is published this week. The signatories are Ann Pettifor, Marc Wadsworth and Vladimir Derer of Labour Left Liaison (aka hard) and Ken Livingstone, Joan Ruddock, George Galloway and Peter Hain of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee (aka soft).

How have-nots can share working-class triumphalism

CHARLIE LEADBEATER

outlines a political strategy for the left that can win support in a starkly divided nation

ONE OF THE key lessons of the election campaign was that while the growth of unemployment, poverty, inequality and division may elicit compassion, or even the judgment that Labour has the best policies for these problems, none of these developments automatically produces political or cultural identification with Labour among key groups of the electorate. The assumption that socialism will survive and prosper because it offers to heal these divisions has been fundamentally undermined by the Tories' re-election.

The truth is that the Tories have developed a political strategy for coping with these divisions, for legitimising inequality, encouraging acquiescence in it, that is more powerful than Labour's alternative. For the argument that strong support for Labour can somehow be read off from inequality and social deprivation rests on two assumptions. First, that inequality, poverty, and unemployment are wrong. Second, that social, collective action to tackle these problems is a legitimate, effective response. For a crucial group — the triumphant, affluent working class — these assumptions have but a tenuous hold.

The problem for the left is thus twofold. First, developing a strategy for redistribution and economic growth that will improve the position of the dispossessed underclass which the government's policies have created. This goes well beyond the task set for economic management or the welfare state in the postwar era of full employment.

Second, developing a politics which the new working class will identify with. This goes beyond the detail of policies on taxation, home ownership, and renationalisation. It will require a thoroughgoing reorientation of the Labour Party's politics. The left is struggling to come to terms with a society which has moved away from it in some fundamental sense. The left is both out of touch with the culture of affluence which pervades these people's lives, but it also has little positive to say about the economic underpinnings of that culture. In short it seems to lack a view about how left policies would build an internationally competitive economy which via efficiency brings security and prosperity to workers.

It may be that these voters were impressed by the professionalism of the Kinnock broadcasts. But they are still likely to identify more strongly with the assertiveness of 'Nothing is Going to Stop Me Now', the most recent Samantha Fox pop video.

There is 'Our Sam', fresh from the disco pub, no elitist designer clothes but top-of-the-range

disco pub gear, driving fast cars, flying planes, at the helm of a power boat, dancing with grandpas in Marbella. It is unashamed, brassy, determined, full of energy and extrovert pleasure — and comes without a trace of guilt. It stands for many of the affluent working class. The gains of recent years, a steadily rising income, home ownership, easy credit, are too insecure, the list of aspirations yet to be fulfilled too long, to allow guilt.

This affluent working class has been the agent of enormous social change in Britain over the last few years. It has been at large in the ranks of share buyers and homebuyers. It has wrought social change through Ford Escort convertibles and compact discs rather than the dour task of revolutionary struggle. Why vote for a politics with traces of the latter when you can have the former?

Support for Tory policies has been built into the fabric of the world they have created. Labour's policies may have been modernised and refined as instruments of change. But Tory policies have never been merely instrumental. They are also constitutive. For many in the affluent working class, their status must be inextricably wrapped up with Mrs Thatcher's politics. She has created a world in which they thrive.

Power to get your own back

The affluent working class is trapped in the pincers of the Tories' double-edged use of the ideology of freedom. The collective freedom of consumers, whether in Birmingham, Hamburg or Osaka, to change their preferences and opt for a different supplier creates an imperative for workers. They have to change, adapt, become more flexible, to stay in jobs. In this context individual freedom comes to have a special allure. Power comes outside work through occasional chances to be a free consumer, to get your own back. While workers might view the chances of making gains at work pessimistically, they will view the home, family-centred world much more optimistically.

These voters also wanted a sense of stability. That is not merely a financial calculation but a reflection of their sense of themselves. Thatcherism does not just offer continuing economic rewards for the affluent working class, it also offers legitimisation for their aspirations. Aspirations are not just an expression of desire. They carry with them a sense of what is the good life. Many of the aspirations of the new working class have been formed by Thatcherism. A vote for Thatcher was a vote for a stable, predictable social framework, in which they could continue to have a rising, favoured social status.

Labour has been left behind by this *culture* of individualism and consumerism. But it is paralysed in the face of the *economics* which underpins it. The election exposed the left's great weakness — its failure to think economically.

Underlying the left's paralysis is a fundamental shift in what people think efficiency consists of, and how competitiveness, security and prosperity can be delivered.

In the postwar years the state played a vital role in managing the economy to promote efficiency, growth and rising living standards. Many people now believe that this task is beyond government, that it rests more narrowly with companies becoming more competitive, paying their way in the world. It is best to leave companies to decide how best to become more efficient to fight off competition. These are the economic decisions which will determine whether people have jobs in the future, not the decisions made by civil servants, and politicians, about how to manipulate interest rates and money supply.

But it is not just the view of how good economic decisions should be made which has changed. The content of the idea of efficiency has changed as well. In the postwar years there was some kind of social ideal of efficiency: social costs, such as redundancy and unemployment, had to be taken into account in the pursuit of efficiency.

In contrast, the current view of efficiency is much narrower. Company profitability is the vital measure and purpose of efficiency, the precondition of long-term job security and rising living standards. Labour and the unions are no

‘What do you say to a docker who earns £400 a week, owns his own house, a new car, microwave and video? You don't say let me take you out of your misery brother’

longer seen as credible, trustworthy providers of efficiency. Workers may not trust managements more than they used to; they may not identify with firms more than they used to; they may not like changing working practices. But there is a realistic recognition that their jobs are founded on competitiveness and efficiency.

This presents the left with a seemingly impossible dilemma, if it wants to be associated with the source of prosperity within a society which is increasingly dominated by the logic of the market. The growth in competitiveness in recent years has been delivered with the unacceptable costs of mass unemployment, growing inequalities and division. To endorse that efficiency, which is the wellspring of affluence and security for workers, is to endorse policies which

have led to mass unemployment. But to argue that the Tories' management of the economy has been a disaster hardly accords with the experience of the affluent working class, whose real earnings gains over the past few years have outstripped anything under the last Labour government, thanks to a combination of lower inflation and higher profitability and competitiveness.

'Let me help you, brother'

Sprucing up Labour's image; changing the form in which its policies are delivered; highlighting existing policies which should appeal to the affluent — all can play their part. But they are the relatively easy bit. The hard bit is persuading people that the left has even the vaguest inkling of what choices people have to face working in companies facing persistent, heavy competition. Until the left is prepared to face those choices rather than wish them away it will never again command an authoritative voice within British society.

How should Labour, the unions and the left address these questions? As Ron Todd, the leader of the Transport and General Workers' Union, said recently: 'What do you say to a docker who earns £400 a week, owns his house, a new car,

microwave, and video as well as a small place near Marbella? You do not say let me take you out of your misery brother.' But in appealing to the affluent working class Labour cannot jettison the dispossessed, the minorities. Labour is the proper political home for these groups; they suffer social disadvantage and economic exploitation which will not disappear and which are unjust. An attempt to sanitise the party of the politics of the disenfranchised — in the name of the mythical ordinary Labour voter — would be both wrong and unsuccessful.

There are two themes which Labour should pursue. First it must reorient its economic policies. Quite straightforwardly, if there had been a Labour government which had produced lower unemployment and yet had also delivered the consistent economic growth of the last few years, Labour would have been championing its ability to run the economy. It must once again show that economic growth and competitiveness can be reconciled or even fostered by its social goals. The labour movement must try to embed its social goals in the productive economy as well as giving the state a role to regulate the economy from the outside.

Even the affluent working class, for all its

security, is vulnerable to restructuring and the introduction of new technology. A strategy for easing restructuring, ensuring it does not lead to catastrophic social costs, is essential. Cuts in working time would not only help to ensure productivity gains go to social benefits, to benefit workers rather than profit. It would also help to alleviate unemployment. It would be a consumers' demand as much as a workers' demand, for reduced working time would free greater areas for consumption and freedom outside work.

The value-for-money logic of consumption should be fed back into the sphere of work, to encourage workers to ask whether their employers are really giving them good value. For instance British employers are extremely vulnerable for their poor record on training. Extra training does not stand in the way of competitiveness, it is a precondition for it. It is also a vital precondition for workers' long-term job security and earnings growth. A CBI-sponsored working party is likely to recommend that managers should have ten days off-the-job training a year. Why should that not be a workers' right?

The labour movement also needs to look at its policies on ownership. Companies with smaller, more highly skilled workforces are introducing a variety of forms of employee involvement, ranging from quality circles to profit sharing. This shows that companies believe that their smaller workforce can have a potentially greater say over production, so it would be better to integrate them into business goals and culture. Unions need to pick up on the general growth of private ownership in houses and shares to encourage workers that they have an equal right of ownership over their jobs.

The second area of ownership that needs to be addressed is social ownership. Take, for example, the case of British Telecom: the mounting consumer disenchantment with BT should provide a reservoir of support for a change of policy. But merely reiterating the need to return BT to public ownership will not persuade consumers that they are going to get a better deal. The left needs to look for ways of introducing some effective competition into the lumbering monopoly to ensure that it has to listen to the consumers. One possible structure might be along the lines of the ITV network franchise system, which produces a regulated kind of competition. If Labour does not even explore the possibility of competition it will not win over the disillusioned consumers.

Inhabiting different worlds

The second general theme Labour should pursue is that of citizenship. The two schematic groups, the underclass and the affluent working class, live in two different worlds. The more entrenched the affluent working class becomes in its world the less recognisable become the disenfranchised as members of the same community, owed the same rights. Thatcherism has thrown in doubt the idea of what it is to be a citizen in British society.

An appeal at the level of citizenship rights is pitched at the individual, rather than in terms of grey institutions, social collectivities. Too many on the left still see individuals as merely the hapless bearers of these larger structures. It is still a strong, residual, condescending belief of a substantial part of the left that individual choices in capitalist society are the expressions of false consciousness. Labour's policies must be built up from the microfoundations of choices.

But Labour must also set out to build on



Camera Press

'Our Sam': unashamed, brassy, determined pleasure at new-found affluence — without a hint of guilt

New Statesman 21 August 1987

common areas between the insiders and outsiders in British society. If we assume zero altruism on behalf of the insiders, then the only way they will support policies which will bring benefits to the outsiders is if they are offered benefits as well. The idea of citizenship rights is implicit in the strong support for the state education and health services. Improvements in either potentially benefit all.

Labour must highlight or create other common areas. Control over your own home should form a citizenship right, either through outright ownership or through some kind of leasing arrangement. There are plenty of working-class people who want to buy their homes but are not able to. Why should Labour not be the party of the aspirant first-time buyer offering to reform the home loan system, to allow them some way into the housing market? The establishment of a common housing allowance would mean that homeowners and council tenants would have a common reference point. They would then not inhabit entirely different cultures.

In similar vein Labour should also examine whether some form of individual ownership of the nation's assets should form a citizenship right. In a sense this would be to extend the principles behind the privatisation share issues back into other areas, to touch people who have been unable to take part. The economics of privatisation, the subsidies the Tories have effectively given people, should not lead the left automatically to assume that individual share ownership is something to be denied.

A proper nationally-funded nursery system would also bring benefits to both the insiders and outsiders. Many double-earner couples must want improved paternity and maternity rights as well as access to a good childminding service. Similarly, single mothers, or parents with several children. Such a commitment would speak to both groups; it would be a major investment in the cherished family-home-centred world.

Labour must also do something about its tax and benefit proposals. What is required is a fundamental review, not a mere tinkering here and there. In the process it should consider the principles behind a guaranteed minimum income for all provided by the state. A full income guarantee would be extremely costly. But nevertheless the principle of people having some income from a common source should be explored. How else will it be possible to build up some sense of common reference point between the unemployed, those dependent on social security payments and those in full-time jobs?

In essence, then, Labour's renewal must follow two complementary paths. It must explore ways to combine an internationally competitive economy, which breeds security and prosperity via efficiency, with a social purpose to ensure the benefits lead to social gains rather than merely an increase in profits. And it must respond to the individualisation, the privatisation of consumer culture. But policies framed with this in mind must also spread social benefits more widely, and try to build common interests between the insiders and the outsiders. □

Charlie Leadbeater is a writer on the Financial Times. His book, In Search of Work (written with John Lloyd), is published by Penguin at the end of this month.

What's wrong with partition

**CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS, the
NS's Washington correspondent,
takes the side of the Greeks in Cyprus**

Nicosia

I LIKE the old quarter of Nicosia, which has become a sort of enclave amid the encircling boom. I like the making of transactions in worn banknotes instead of credit cards. I like the fact that you can still find people to do impossible jobs, like radio repair or the fixing of jewellery. I like the way that the butter-coloured stone still holds the paint of angry slogans from years ago.

My preferred hangout is Sophocles Street, where in the space of a leisurely morning I can get my hair cut, my teeth peered at, my watch repaired and a battered suitcase stitched up. A social centre for the street is provided by Nicos the pharmacist, who dispenses coffee and offers panoptic reviews of the situation. Here one notices the nuances. The Socialist Party daily is preferred, for instance, while the barber tends to make a point of leaving the Communist paper lying about. The Armenians across the street are careful to offend nobody (they have their own reserved seat in the Cypriot parliament) while in a coffee shop round the corner the press of the Right and the extreme Right is flaunted with more than a hint of ostentation. If I walk a few blocks further along, I come to the Maronite district. Greek is still spoken, with hints of the Aramaic dialect of the Khormakitis region, and the cedar of Lebanon is displayed. Pictures of Amin Gemayel hang in the clubs next to those of the President of Cyprus.

One can only savour this satisfying blend of national and political pluralism by keeping to an invisible but well-marked route. Turn just a few doors down and you come suddenly upon the oil drums, machine-gun nests and guard posts that mark the line of division. Raising your eyes to the Pentadactylos range beyond, you see a vast star and crescent blazoned on the hillside, together with a taunting Turkish military slogan. Between these hills and their former inhabitants are the guns of NATO; this time pointed by a dictatorship at a democracy. Suddenly, the chemist and the Armenian leather-merchant and the old barber begin to look like those sturdy people who persist in growing vines on the slopes of Etna or Vesuvius. Everything here is provisional. Life is lived under the gun. This is the 'normality' which the great powers are enjoining the Cypriots to accept (and which they are, in their own way, happy to accept on the Cypriots' behalf).

I have been to the Allenby bridge on the Jordan, and to the Berlin Wall and to Panmunjom in Korea. I have been patted down by British soldiers on the country roads in Donegal which demarcate the Six Counties. But only the Koreans are separated like the Cypriots. Palestinians have taken me to see their old homes in Jerusalem and

later to supper with Jewish comrades. West Germans visit relatives or make day trips. Irishmen come and go as they please. For the Cypriots a form of *apartheid* has been contrived. It has been made physically impossible for a Greek and a Turk to share a drink together. In this humiliating position they are made to listen to lectures from visiting politicians who urge them to forget their differences and cease brooding upon the past.

Peerless fatuity

It was in the neighbourhood of Sophocles Street that I sat down to read through the report of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee. The document at least had the effect of taking my mind off my surroundings. It was impossible to believe that the distinguished British parliamentarians were talking about the same country as the one I was sitting in. Here is Sir Anthony Kershaw, the committee chairman, in the course of a fawning interjection into the testimony of Baroness Young:

Is not almost everybody quite happy with the situation at the present time? Turkey has her troops there, Turkish Cypriots are safe. Greek Cypriots are prosperous; they have most of the island. It gives Greece something to complain about, which they like.

This is the peerless fatuity that give Britain such a good name in the partition of Palestine and the Indian sub-continent. Something for everyone, what? Don't see what all the fuss is about. He probably thinks the fox enjoys it, too.

Then there was Baroness Young herself. She had heard criticism of the British role in 1974 but was glad to say that the Select Committee had subsequently absolved HMG of all blame. I could scarce believe my eyes. The 1976 Select Committee had said, 'Britain had a legal right to intervene, she had a moral obligation to intervene, she had the military capacity to intervene. She did not intervene for reasons which the Government refuses to give.' Apparently nobody on the 1987 Committee knew enough history to give Baroness Young the lie. Certain that Britain was innocent, she too urged the Cypriots to pull their socks up. The only thing that really mattered, according to her, was the safety of the British bases.

The report became more surreal with every page. In spite of the Committee's professed contempt for 'bygones' and for the history of the dispute, it called one expert witness on the past. Julian Amery, that relic of the age of Lennox Boyd, was allowed to maunder his way through a few patronising anecdotes of the colonial period. His contribution was of the quality that might have been expected from a crony of Ian Smith's.

Best of all was the appearance of Lord Willis, in his capacity as chairman of the 'Friends of Turkish

Cyprus'. When Willis went to Harry Pollitt years ago to ask for release from his duties as a Young Communist League organiser, he said that he wanted to be a full-time writer. 'I think I have it in me,' he told Pollitt solemnly, 'to be the British Maxim Gorky.' Judging by the testimony that the author of *Dixon of Dock Green* gave on this occasion, he has nearly succeeded in becoming the Turkish Mikhail Sholokhov. Seldom can the line of a regime have been so abjectly parroted. Willis's advice — which is that Britain should recognise the client state set up by Turkish arms in the occupied territories — was partially accepted by the Committee. One of its recommendations is that 'normal' trading relations with the Turkish colony be inaugurated.

I trudged home with this mediocre document under my arm. There I met a woman whose name, alas, I must keep to myself. She is a teacher in one of the pitifully few Greek Cypriot communities on the other side. She told me of the way that water had been cut off from her village during the recent heatwave, and of countless other great and small humiliations. It cannot be emphasised enough that 50,000 Cypriots were expelled from their homes in the Karpass peninsula *after* the cessation of hostilities in 1974 and *after* a Turkish promise at the Vienna summit that they would be permitted to stay. The only word for their subsequent expulsion is that it was imperialist. The subsequent forced settlement of colonists from Anatolia, and the callous erasure of all traces of Greek culture, is a direct, pointed violation of international law. Like the banalities of the Commons report, it is the prelude to partition.

A settler state

What's so wrong with partition? Apart, that is, from the fact that it has always failed everywhere it has been tried? Apart from the fact that it negates the expressed and express wishes of the vast majority of the inhabitants of Cyprus? Apart from the fact that there is no economic basis for two states and two economies on the island? Apart from the fact that it sunders three-quarters of a million people from architecture, wealth and culture that it took them nine unbroken millennia to create? Apart from the fact that it is prohibited by the very treaty under which Turkey claimed the right to intervene in 1974? Apart from the fact that Britain is bound by treaty to oppose it? Apart from the fact that it would be a curtain-raiser to a third and bloody round of battle?

What are these objections to set against the appeasement of Turkey by the Reagan administration and its allies? A settler state is being created in northern Cyprus, not in order to suit the convenience of the Turkish Cypriots (who still vote in large numbers against partition) but in order to act as a military base for further regional adventures. If you don't believe me, then look at the plans for the giant airfield at Lefkoniko. Or read the outraged editorials that appeared in the honest Turkish Cypriot press when Mr Rauf Denktash admitted on television that his associates were the first to plant bombs to foment inter-communal violence. Until he made this astounding confession, it has been an article of faith among Turkish Cypriot nationalists that the notorious bomb outside the Turkish consulate in Nicosia had been planted by EOKA.

Mr Denktash doesn't have to care very much about international sentiment these days, protected as he is by the multi-billion dollar aid programme that is supplied to Turkey without strings by the Pentagon. But those who do feel

tender about Turkish Cypriot rights — as they should — might ask why Turkey demanded Cyprus and Rhodes from Hitler as its price for ending wartime neutrality*. They might inquire why Mr Denktash's organisation used to call itself the 'Cyprus is Turkish Party'. All this was long before Greek agitation against colonial rule had even begun in earnest.

The forcible dismemberment of Cyprus by an infinitely stronger neighbour, in other words, has little to do with minority rights. It has to do with

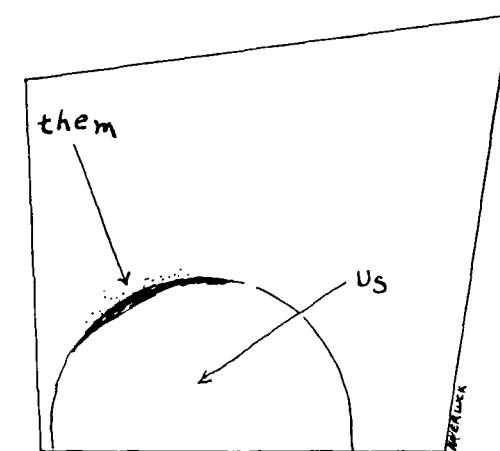
‘For the Cypriots a form of apartheid has been contrived. It has been made physically impossible for a Greek and a Turk to share a drink together’

wrenching the lives of the islanders apart in order to suit more cynical interests.

In order to conceal this unpalatable fact, a spurious vocabulary of moral equivalence has sprung into existence. The Reagan administration speaks of 'the Greek side' and 'the Turkish side' as if the invader and the invaded were equals. The House of Commons report speaks of 'North Cyprus' and 'South Cyprus' in the same way. *De facto* recognition is offered to Mr Denktash's 'independent' regime, which is in reality no more than a shadow thrown by Turkey. It uses Turkish money, Turkish troops and its clocks keep mainland Turkish time. The Turkish embassy dwarfs its 'Parliament' and according to the protests of Turkish Cypriot democrats the Turkish ambassador 'sits in' on its cabinet meetings. On a recent visit Mr Turgut Ozal, Prime Minister of Turkey, commented with satisfaction that he felt he was in a province of Turkey.

Yet in this context it is the Republic of Cyprus that is being pressed to make concessions. Even John Torode, in the *New Statesman* of 24 July, ridicules their intransigence by saying they want 'the strongest possible federal government *and* the maximum return of land to Greek Cypriot control *and* the right of all Greek Cypriot refugees to

*See *The Evasive Neutral* by Professor Frank Weber, University of Missouri Press, 1979.



The Russians, being cunning and devious, hide their country behind the curve in the earth so we can't see. We, on the other hand, are right out in the open on the flat part

return to their homes in the north *and* freedom for all Greek Cypriots to own property and do business there and to move freely across the federal border *and* the total withdrawal of all Turkish troops *and* international guarantees.'

In pursuit of realism

Well, this is what the United Nations has voted for more than a dozen times, with Britain and the US in the 'aye' lobby. It is also no less than any other European citizen expects as a right. Cyprus is a member of the European family and an associate member of the EEC. Turkey wishes to join the EEC. On present conditions Turkish membership would mean importing the artificial partition of Cyprus into the Community — precisely negating its original purpose of abolishing anomalous barriers. Turkey can be asked to make concessions on Cyprus as part of its price of entry (though Baroness Young significantly opposed this 'linkage' in her evidence). But that won't happen if the call for concessions is abandoned in advance in pursuit of some pseudo version of 'realism'.

One could invert the Torode satire. Turkey wants the whole of Cyprus *but* will settle for the economically most developed third of the island *if* this annexation is given international recognition *and* if it is also given a 50-50 share in the administration of the remaining Republic *as well as* the right to station troops and planes where and when it pleases. In addition, it wants recognition as the injured party in the dispute. Not bad for an 18 per cent minority. As Lord Caradon once put it, their ultra-rightist leadership wants to be 'master in the north and partner in the south'.

The Cypriot majority is still battling to throw off the legacy of 300 years of Ottoman rule followed by a century of British divide-and-rule colonialism.** The most poisonous recent inheritance is that left by the seven-year Greek junta, which murdered Greek socialists and democrats as well as making a covert agreement with Turkey to remove Archbishop Makarios and partition the island. (How interesting it is, by the way, to find that many former supporters of the Greek junta in Britain and America are now apologists for the Turkish invasion.)

To read the House report, you would not know that anything had changed in Greece since 1974. For example, at the conclusion of the document Greece is asked to give up the claim for *enosis* — the union of Cyprus with Greece — which is a claim it does not make. Turkey is not asked, in the paragraph addressed to it, to give up the demand for partition — which is a claim it *does* make. Andreas Papandreou has proposed at the United Nations that Turkish troops be replaced by a larger UN peacekeeping force, to be supplied by Islamic countries of the Turkish Cypriots' own choosing, for which Greece would pay. This internationalist proposal, which would allow one to distinguish between Turkish claims about security and Turkish excuses for expansionism, has been ignored by the British, American and Turkish governments.

The struggle of the Cypriot majority is not an easy one and it has by no means always been flawlessly led. But it can still be supported without any legal, historical, moral or political qualm. Can the same be said by those who, having found it too much trouble to rebuke the invader, have now turned to 'persuading' the invaded? □

**This aspect of the matter is very well discussed in *Cyprus and The Governorship of Sir Ronald Storrs* by George Georgiallides (Cyprus Research Centre)

Taking out the lumps

DUNCAN CAMPBELL *on why football is not a game for all the family, nor is likely to be*

A FEW YEARS ago, a friend on her summer holiday from California said she would like to see a football game in Britain. She had become interested in 'soccer' in America and was now helping to coach an under-11s team which was sponsored by the local ice cream parlour.

It was still summer and the only game in town was the Charity Shield, a pretty uninspiring contest usually. But it was at Wembley, home of the game, so we went. I explained that we would be standing in the terraces and she said that would be terrific — it transpired later that she had pictured the sort of grassy terrace you find in an English country manor.

Still, she got her rural idyll when we arrived. The West Ham fans were singing 'An English Country Garden', that irritating old pop song. She couldn't quite make out the words they were using so I had to translate: 'How many blacks can you kill with an axe/In an English country garden?/How many queers can you hang by their ears/In an English country garden?'

The urine flowed down the steps, the chants became more explicit, the game was dull, the journey back on the Bakerloo line was punctuated by obscene insults hurled at Asian staff on the tube. It was Bonnie's first sight of English football and her last.

She was unlucky, certainly. But not that unlucky. And her experience is worth bearing in mind with the start of the football season just upon us. For this is seen by the new Sports Minister Colin Moynihan as the make or break season for English football. In March a decision will be made as to whether English clubs are allowed back into European competition following the indefinite ban imposed after the Heysel stadium tragedy. He has already held talks with the UEFA president Jacques Georges, but everything rests on how English football behaves itself in the next six months. Turn the game back into a 'family entertainment', goes the Moynihan argument, and we will be allowed back into Club Europe.

A game for the boys

The notion of 'the game for all the family' has informed most of the suggestions made ritually at the start of every season: more seating, better facilities (there were no toilets for women at Chelsea last season), decent relations with the local community and the like. Behind the suggestions is an imagined picture of a jolly family in bright new club colours roaring the local lads on before heading off to the car park and driving home for a plate of steaming spaghetti hoops. The jolly families, goes the theory, will eventually drive out the hooligan and the thug. Time is running out, we are told; last season 17 million people went through the turnstiles, more than nine million down on ten years ago.

Like most football fans, I started watching as a

boy. The team was Hearts, the town was Edinburgh and I went along every other weekend with a friend called Bill.

The Hearts' song was that old forces' favourite 'Bless 'em all', except that a more common word than 'bless' was used. The song's imperative was to do this to Rangers, the Celtic and all, then to Partick Thistle, then Third Lanark. It ended with a plaintive east coast cry which went, since we're in a community singing sort of mood:

We've got our backs to the wall,
As back to the west coast they crawl,
Cos we'll no' be mastered
By no Glasgow bastard
So up with the Hearts . . . and so on.

Now I know that women were pretty foreign creatures at that age, but hard though I scour the mind I cannot picture many at those games. Showers of green pale ale bottles coming sailing down onto the pitch at times of doubtful refereeing decisions, yes. I can even remember an irate Hearts fan ripping the indicator arm off an old Morris Minor that had dared to peep its way through the Gorgie Road throng. But women? Families? They were as common as a rosary in a Rangers dressing room. Football as a 'family entertainment' described by the present footballing authorities never did exist. It was a boys' game played by boys who had become young men and watched by boys some of whom had become older men.

Which is why any attempt to make an artificial implant of a family onto football is doomed. Lots of women do go but few of them as a family unit,

sitting neatly in their bucket seats waiting for a nod of approval from Jimmy Hill. Why should they? They have hardly been welcomed, even as little girls barred by daft Football Association rules from playing with the under-11 boys.

The ingenious hooligan

The second 'solution' after the family entertainment number — and one which comes from the left wing, too — is the idea that clubs should be given back to their 'communities'. This is not a bad idea on the surface, just as the government's idea of giving mental patients back to the community was not a bad idea on the surface. The only problem is finding the damn community and once you've found them persuading them that they want to be involved. And it does, like the government's 'community care' plan, have to be a two-way decision. I once interviewed the captain of Arsenal about what he thought about Islington, where his club was housed and worshipped. 'Seems OK,' he said, 'but to be honest I only ever see it once a fortnight through the coach window.'

This is the League's one hundredth anniversary. To celebrate it they are to raise £50 million to 'build an exclusive football centre which will house a soccer university', as the latest *Football Monthly* puts it. They're still looking for the right location and will presumably inform the local community when they find it.

The third stand of the sanitisation-for-Europe plan is to introduce identity cards to test the ingenuity of the hooligan. And will the fabled ID



card make the terrace-fighting man disappear?

Sorry to go through the kit-bag of memories on this, but football does have that effect — I was asked to do a piece for the *Sunday Times* magazine at the time of the World Cup on the subject of Scottish football fans. Summoned in to be briefed by the editor, I was asked what I thought of football hooligans. Recognising this to be a trick question and fearing the speedy loss of a commission if I gave the wrong answer, I did a body-swerve and came up with one of those 'It's a complicated problem . . .' responses. 'Well, I think they're great,' he said. 'If they weren't taking lumps out of each other every weekend, they'd be taking lumps out of old ladies in shopping precincts.'

That's a seductive response but too neat. There are enough innocent souls and harmless bar staff who have had lumps carved out of them for no other reason than being in the wrong place at the wrong time. There's also something slightly sad about seeing young boys waiting for a tube station on a Saturday night and suddenly ditching their scarves or rosettes into a bin as they hear the swelling sounds of the other mob approaching.

That old magic

Football is still a terrific game. Most people who watch it would prefer to do so without the odd risk of a dart through the ear and would prefer to reminisce about Bowles rather than Knife when it comes to Stanleys. But the 'solution' to such things does not come any easier than any of the great solutions in life, and they come, too, only when one side starts to appreciate the other side's problems.

I suggest we celebrate the hundredth anniversary by setting aside one Saturday when all the boards of all the clubs and all the commentators and administrators and all the players not playing that week spend the afternoon on the terraces, try to buy a pie, talk to the people around, find their way home, see if they spot the mythical family or the place where the mythical family would be at home and re-discover the magic that they lost as they climbed higher and higher up the stand stairs.

Of course we need nicer grounds — Californian friends took me to the San Francisco 49ers ground which was so clean and neat you could have eaten your granny off it; of course, the clubs have to involve the people who live around the ground; of course, we want to discard the knife merchants. But let's deal with the reality of it and keep the dreams for the pitch.

I was back at this year's Charity Shield, this time with visitors from Hong Kong. The game was sponsored by a car manufacturer who reckoned that that permitted them to inflict a 'cavalcade' of their latest models on us at half-time. Inevitably, since they have as much imagination as the vehicles themselves, they put a different kind of model — you guessed it — on the bonnets of the cars.

This provoked the singing of 'Bread of Heaven' with the words 'Get your tits out' substituted for the usual ones. Why they put the women through the indignity, why they made the rest of us look at their dreary cars had nothing to do with football.

And what the football administrators and the people who want English football back in Europe have to realise is that if they patronise the fans it does not *necessarily* follow that the fans will patronise football. □

Duncan Campbell is a freelance journalist.

PARLIAMENTARY SKETCH

The baroque potential of PR

Edward Pearce

IT IS rather touching to see that 27 motions are down for Labour Party conference on PR.

Not that Labour plans to go further down the road of impersonating Cecil Parkinson handing out flowers and undergoing face massage than Bryan Gould has already taken it.

Following the initial enthusiasm of Robin Cook, we are into proportional representation. Not for me to do a Peter Kellner here. Peter can split a percentile at 30 paces; they hire me for the better class of adjective. But even half-numerate people like myself cannot help noticing that while PR does wonders for the Liberals and may arguably do even more for Dr Owen's huddled Housecarls, and while it will hit the over-represented Tories like a margin call to an underfunded player of the market, what it does for Labour, either way, is not very much.

Clustered in their safe northern seats, punished in London, Labour on 31 per cent of the vote would be slightly down in a House of Angelically exact proportions. Theoretically what is being offered at Brighton is a coalition with the Liberals, free access to the Andrew Ellis book of electoral ethics and the Young Liberals who may yet bring from Neil Kinnock his best Bournemouth denunciations. I have always seen them as a junior Chamber of Mau Mau, but that's a personal view.

Is this, you ask, what Labour wants? Are they ready for union with Cyril Smith? Because, on the hypothetical arithmetic, if Labour gets into government through PR, which looks like the idealistic object of this outing, they will be combining plus or minus 31 per cent of their own with whatever percentage the new post-merger Liberal Party takes. For the record, at the last election the Liberals took 12 per cent (largely due to having the more succulent seats) while the SDP had 10 per cent.

Let us make an almighty hypothesis and suppose that Mrs Thatcher, finding herself after Labour conference alone in her defence of a system which mysteriously adds a bonus vote to the Conservatives for every two they receive (59 per cent of seats for 42 per cent of votes), shyly acknowledges her fault, accepts the need to be fair and gives in. When the squadron of prize Berkshire whites has flown in formation over the Pavilion, the arithmetic will still look porous and likely to let in rain. Bump Labour up to 34 per cent assuming that they improve by half as much again as they did this time; assume when you do an estimate for the new Liberals that any condition of buddy-buddyness with Labour will offset gains they make from the now severed, perhaps renamed but still funded, kicking and contesting SDP.

There are people currently voting Liberal who will not do so if the likely outcome is to make Neil Kinnock Prime Minister. It is very wicked and petty bourgeois of them, but there you are. Liberal arithmetic in this projected circumstance is full of floating debits and credits and as unstable as nitroglycerine, an explosive which, before Alfred Nobel came along, was notorious for blowing up its users. Admittedly, what Nobel invented in stabilising nitroglycerine was dynamite! The Liberals tend to see PR in this light. But then there was always something not very grown up about the Liberals.

Let us suppose that allowing for gains through merger offset by losses at the prospect of voting indirectly for Dangerous Red Kinnock, the Liberal Party comes out of an election with 14 per cent, two more than its independent holding now (and that is lavish thinking), our prospective coalition partners will have 48 per cent (34 plus 14). But supposing no further parties get into the act the greatest potential gainer could be one David Anthony Llewellyn Owen, not a figure to whom many candles will be lit in Labour circles. Supposing he has only eight per cent, and since the Labour aversion voting rule applies in reverse to his grouping he easily could come out with 52 seats.

DR OWEN'S problems will be solved by PR. Small craft with some appeal which are too flimsy for the present minority-crunching system, float sweetly high on the tide. Indeed there is much to be said for the fairness of this as long as Labour have it clear in their minds that they are sculpting Hans-Dietrich Genscher in granite.

It is indeed a myth to suggest that David Owen wants to *join* the Tories. That is one of those prophecies which is self-unfulfilling. It has been said too often too publicly to happen. But taking a small but viable party into coalition *with* the Tories, ah that's quite another thing. They would be delighted, well able to make the sort of concessions which validate such deals. Then of course 48 per cent under PR is worth less than 42 per cent under the comfortable old iniquity.

I'm not saying Labour shouldn't have a go for the reform (still less that the Lady of the Unbountiful Countenance will give it them). But under these charming circumstances we shall be into real coalitions and into blocking votes.

Now if anything is apparent from a study of politics it is the importance of enmity. The Conservative Party quietly heaves with people who would like to stir ground glass into Mrs Thatcher's Welsh Rarebit. Labour, underneath the Kinnock re-spray, carries the rust and bodywork damage of a vehicle driven in its time at walls, passing trains and party members. Faction is everywhere.

The beauty of PR lies in its baroque potential, baroque in the true sense of letting the maker mould from above. Factions of a party will in Italy, where the political baroque is serious business, deftly adjust a government to taste adding here a Piccoli, there a Forlani, delicately offset with a member of the Cossiga faction, a man for the Vatican, someone not too horribly prejudiced against old Sicilian customs, a man for liberal good intentions — and *that* is just the Christian Democrats. By all means Labour should adopt PR, but in the full knowledge that they are also buying pick and mix pizza. □

ARTS

PHOTOGRAPHY

Marriages made in heaven

Liz Heron

Boris

Camerawork until 5 September

IN *SWING TIME*, Fred Astaire is conned into missing his wedding when his fellow dancers draw fake turn-ups on a magazine mannequin's outfit. They convince him he's about to commit the unthinkable — go to the altar in unfashionable trousers. The clients of Boris Bennett, whose wedding pictures often make them look like high society types stepping out in some other Fred and Ginger film, could rest assured that Boris would remedy any such lapses. As well as tidying up sagging posture or defects of the figure, his retouchers would sharpen a trouser crease on the negative, or make sure the gentleman's suit sleeves exposed the requisite white cuff length: Boris insisted on a quarter of an inch exactly.

Something of a dandy himself, and by all accounts a charmer, Boris took around 150,000 wedding photographs in the Whitechapel Road studios that he ran between 1927-45. He earned a reputation as 'the doyen of Jewish portrait photographers', putting competitors in the shade with the stylishness of his pictures and the glamour that attended the portrait sessions.

It was unusual in the 1920s and '30s for Jewish wedding photographs to be taken at the event. Boris worked in the studio, where, of course, a greater degree of artifice is possible. He started out with flat, painted back-drops in the sombre Victorian manner, then devised specially built art deco sets, used with suitably high-key lighting, creating a cinematic style of portraiture that became his hallmark — 'Boris brought Hollywood to the East End.'

In the '30s the Boris Studio had a red, neon-lit frontage, with a liveried commissioner to greet the bridal couples and hold back the crowds that turned up to watch them arrive from the synagogue. Inside, in the plush reception lounge, they waited to be posed in succession. On a Sunday, the most popular day for Jewish weddings, Boris would photograph dozens, once reaching a record of 56.

Few of the original negatives have survived. The *Camerawork* exhibition, organised as part of the summer-long Jewish East End Celebration, has drawn on loans from family albums and on oral reminiscences. It affectionately commemorates the artistry of Boris at the same time as it celebrates a popularly remembered aspect of local history.

But, because the artifice is so heightened, the photographs are also striking examples of what's distinctive about wedding portraiture. The role of fashion and style in these pictures supremely highlights the wedding photograph as a ritual emblem through which people present highly



Betty and David Finn (1940)
projecting brittle urbanity
courtesy of Boris

idealised *social* selves. More convention-bound than any other kind of formal portraiture (photographic manuals set out a rigid repertoire of poses), wedding photography is also the one that involves the least complicated and most collaborative contract between photographer and sitters; hence the speed with which Boris could pack them in — post-studio adjustments to the portraits were agreed after the honeymoon, when proofs could be perused at leisure.

The aim wasn't just to flatter, but to create a look, an atmosphere that would accommodate the bridal couple's aspirations (on one of the rare occasions when extravagant social pretensions are publicly tolerated and even approved). With wedding portraiture there's no question of drawing out character or revealing relationships; and, above all in the studio, bride and groom become social actors, playing out a role already performed by millions.

The social preoccupations may differ. Besides the traditional groupings, wedding photographers these days usually offer the option of poses that place bride and groom in a misty 'romantic' scenario where sylvan soft-focus stages sentiment.

Impossible not to connect the rash of such pictures in high street studio windows with the '80s revival in royal weddings awash with romantic fairy-tale trimmings.

Some of Boris' '30s couples are anything but 'romantic' in the sense of that pseudo-intimacy. One elegant and unsmiling pair projects brittle urbanity to perfection. Brides posed alone exude fashion-plate hauteur. It's not a love story these pictures conjure, but social status, something that counted for more in those Depression days and whose affluent modernity permeated the cinema aesthetic these pictures recreate.

The illusion works superbly, so bright with glamour that it's hard to believe some of the men in white tie and cut-away tails, the women with their foaming lace and lavish tumbling trains, aren't film stars or idle rich, but rag trade workers — the suit from Moss Bros and the train, often the one first worn by Boris' wife, on a dress designed by Boris himself. Of course, utter complicity was required, and Boris' most successful pictures are those free of extraneous personnel like morose and fidgety young bridesmaids.

The weddings too were often lavish affairs,

insurance policies cashed in to pay for them; but the pictures remain long after, not just a fantasy, but proof of its reality, however temporary. When we look at family wedding pictures from the past, it is, after all, their social solidity that strikes us, never the incongruities.

Today's wedding videos, one would imagine, undercut this whole effect, showing the actors still in costume, but offstage, out of role, which is probably why the professionally packaged ones often mix the live action with the wedding pictures, to remind you of the *real* performance. It's the still portrait that transfixes it. If, stylistically, these pictures resemble film stills, they have, in effect, a quite opposite function. They're not stilted set-ups that supposedly freeze a moment in a narrative, but icons that give the whole proceedings an indelible meaning of their own. □

MUSIC

D'Arby days

Simon Reynolds

A WHILE BACK, somebody invented the term 'miserabilism' to describe any pop that dealt with tragedy or doubt, the idea being that such music was apolitical, mere morbid, self-indulgent wallowing. At the same time, a vision was emerging of soul as a celebration of pride and dignity and self-belief. In the wake of these twin notions came a series of groups aiming to reach an accommodation between agit-rock's legacy of good intentions and the new belief in soul pop: The Redskins, The Style Council and, most recently, an appallingly pat summation of the lineage — a duet between Curtis Mayfield and Dr Robert of the Blow Monkeys, which could be paraphrased as 'move on up . . . for Labour'.

Seldom explicitly political, **Terence Trent D'Arby** nonetheless peddles a similar vision of soul as a crash course in self-sufficient fortitude, his songs full of lyrics like 'it ain't easy/but giving up is the easy thing to do'. D'Arby is one of those pop phenomena that seem vaguely *called for*, demanded into being by pop's climate of desire. In this case, a hankering for ye olde 'real soul' is married to the requisite '80s designer-socialist sense of image; soul and gospel classicism is relocated to a new world of Filofax self-management. Terence Trent D'Arby is another example of how soul — once a music of breakdown — has become a component of a *Cosmo*-style regimen of narcissism and self-actualisation. Soul as emotional work-out.

The title of his CBS debut LP, *Introducing the Hardline According to Terence Trent D'Arby*, is Terri claiming to have suffered the kind of inspirational tribulations that fired up the soul greats; his biog (an aborted career in boxing, a spell in the army, followed by desertion and court-martial) seems sufficiently rich in character-building experience; but my problem with Terence Trent is his *confidence*, his rich sense of his own 'genius' and destiny. I listen and all I hear is poise, mastery, not someone who's driven, tormented. The accapella epic 'As Yet Untitled' is a grotesque, gut-busting display of technical agility, the man trying too hard to overwhelm and managing only

to sandblast us with the gritty blare of his passion. Overpowering on the surface, but it fails to pierce. What I hear is the strenuous desire to move, rather than someone who is moved.

Why is it that strong voices don't reach me, where broken voices do? Why does strength (of spirit, will) have no resonance for me as an ideal, whereas debility and doubt have a peculiar glamour? This is the crux of the matter, the reason why the cultural politics of miserabilism offer as valid a response to late 20th-century capitalism as 'pride and dignity'. For oppressed groups, a sense of personal value, being the subject of one's life, these are crucial goals. But for a white middle-class male like myself, it's difficult to distinguish 'pride and dignity' from conventional aspiration, the desire to participate in society on its own terms; especially when pride is expressed via style and consumption. (There's a kind of bastardised version of subcultural theory that claims looking 'classy' is a mode of defiance towards class society; I'm not convinced.) For me, it's more relevant to dismantle confidence, undermine the sense of mastery of self.

The conflict here is between a politics of self-realisation and a politics of self-dispersal; between the aesthetics of clear and of cloudy, vision; between the clench of commitment and the letting loose of ecstasy. Maybe the two projects could run in parallel, but to be engaged in constructive politics while simultaneously being involved in the demolition (via cultural 'self-destruction') of the progressivist assumptions which make such a politics possible — that would surely result in schizophrenia. Here, anyway, are some groups engaged in what Paul Morley calls 'the denial of the happy ending in life and entertainment'.

Einsturzende Neubauten are notorious metal-bashing art-terrorists from Berlin, although their leader Blixa Bargeld explained recently that their name (Collapsing New Buildings) refers not to a general apocalypse but to the collapse of structures in the head, of hierarchies in your own body politic. *Fuenf Auf Der Nach Oben Offenen Richterskala* (Some Bizarre) is uncharacteristically subdued; a kind of blues *concrete* as hunted and haunted as Robert Johnson; at other times, a desolate ghost-town C&W obviously inspired by Lee Hazelwood.

The late **Big Black** get their fix from the vertigo that accompanies contemplation of the kind of nauseating atrocity that makes you horribly aware of your own vulnerability, or even makes you doubt your ability to manage your own drives. *Songs About Fucking*, out soon on Blast First, is a final perfect realisation of their inescapable noise; music not as halcyon respite from the world, but as further oppression — made by and for bored kids desperate for desperation, so numb they need a taste of life at its grimmest to make them feel alive.

Big Black also feature on *The Wailing Ultimate*, a superb compilation from the roster of US label Homestead, ranging from the caustic and twisted to the neo-psychedelic. One of the groups, **Great Plains**, ties up this piece with a brilliant quote on the inner sleeve. 'With the possible exception of the New Seekers, I don't think there's been any band with less soul than Great Plains. Whether you define "soul" as the "certitude of essence", "the way James Brown moves" or "pride in your own value", we don't have it.' This is a boast, and applies to all the groups above. None of them has

anything to do with soul in its current definition as inner richness, spiritual robustness. All of them luxuriate in lack, exult in debility. Which is what soul, a long, long time ago, used to be about. □

THEATRE

Quoth he

Victoria Radin

The Wandering Jew

EUGENE SUE adapt. MICHELENE WANDOR and MIKE ALFREDS *Lyttelton*

The Royal Borough

MARTY CRUIKSHANK et al *Theatre Upstairs*

THE EXPERIENCE of Mike Alfreds' *The Wandering Jew* is a bit like going to a party and finding oneself buttonholed by The Ancient Mariner.

At first the tale seems delightfully outlandish and the teller quaint; one imagines adding the incident to one's own store of anecdotes; one may even feel a small, ignoble thrill of godliness for listening to this earnest fellow while all about one others are indulging in commonplace flirtations. Gradually, however, one realises that the teller would go on with the tale regardless of who was listening and in the same manner: that what we have here isn't so much a dialogue as murder by *idée fixe*.

The text is an adaptation by Alfreds and Michelene Wandor of the mid-19th-century *feuilleton* novel by Eugene Sue. The work, now out of print in this country but vastly popular in its own time, sits on my desk, the size of several telephone directories, teeming with satisfyingly empurpled descriptive passages, chunks of dramatic dialogue and pleas for an amelioration of the working conditions of the poor. The Jew of the title appears only at intervals, in tandem with Herodias: both are condemned to wander forever, meeting up once a year at the Bering Straits. Their happiest moment comes at the end, when they know they are dying: a rather lugubrious finale to a play, with its flesh and blood actors, more tolerable on the page. But then the entire second half of Alfreds and Wandor's adaptation, with all the goodies killed off and with rather a lot of morbid medical detail (Sue was a trained surgeon) does not exactly send one zinging into the streets.

There are parallels with modern times. The conspiracy of Jesuits who plot to destroy the far-flung legates of an inheritance could easily be read for your favourite hate group, be it the Tory Party or the Church of Scientology; a plague is sweeping through the world and may be harnessed by the villains for their own use (this could happen to Aids); and the point is made that women earn poorer wages than men. On the other hand, the adaptors retain Sue's potboiling love of moral absolutes, with characters either sickeningly good or hissably bad. In the introduction to the text (published by Methuen at £3.95) Alfreds calls his show a 'tribute to Plot', but this defiant shot at our modern conception of character and motivation need not have immobilised them so thoroughly.

Still, Ilona Sekacz' score, played by nine

musicians, hums and shrieks and occasionally falls into dramatic silences in the pit and Paul Dart's chiaroscuro lighting on his set, which houses a curtained stage inside what looks like a 19th-century railway station, does bring about Alfreds' avowed wish to emulate silent movies. Among the actors, Philip Voss's reptilian villain, the beautiful, brainy, rich and good heroine of the strawberry-ringleted Sian Thomas, the various innocent or evil ladies enjoyed by Paola Dionisotti and Sylvestra Le Touzel, and the two heroes by Mark Rylance rise most gracefully to the stylish, melodramatic gesture.

Mike Alfreds makes large demands on his actors, who take it in turn to recite the bits of narration which substitute for props and keep one constantly apprised of the story's origin as written narrative.

Like Peter Brook, Ariane Mnouckine, the begetters of the Royal Shakespeare Company's version of *Nicholas Nickleby* and the NT's own Peter Hall with *The Orestia*, Alfreds wants to return the theatre to its source as story-telling and ritual, with the concomitant reliance on the skills of the performer. *The Wandering Jew* requires a good deal also from the spectator: running at five hours, not the least of that is time.

Unlike those other directors, Alfreds had a relatively short rehearsal period (though long by comparison to other productions in our big companies) and this work looks very much like a large and be-bunioned foot cramming itself into a pre-moulded shoe. For all his desire to make an Event, there is a curious puritanism about the evening. And yielding us only a half hour of interval in which to visit the loos and wolf down a meal is very unsexy.

Out a back door, down the back stairs and into Sloane Square, its cement stained white with pigeon droppings, we go for the beginning of *The Royal Borough*. This participatory introduction to Marty Cruickshank's anthology-revue about Kensington & Chelsea, its past and present, cleverly establishes a complicity with the actors, who show all the embarrassment of their breed when required to act in their own personae. 'Nineteen Forty . . . Right? Like there was a train on each track,' mysteriously babbled Natasha Williams as, in the company of colleague Eamon Boland, she whirled our small group towards Peter Jones, reminding us that the late K & C resident Sir Osbert Sitwell once proposed a war memorial to a louse and that Augustus John partook of onion soup at the Royal Court Hotel.

Inside the theatre, Anabel Temple's set opened this attic venue's shutters to the outdoors and spread the ground with astroturf. There were Chelsea professional hostesses being bitchy on cellular telephones and a Sloane in a headscarf being beastly in Peter Jones (both of them cuttignly played by Patti Love); a Chelsea Labour supporter for whom the light went out in 1983 (Julia Swift); a Chelsea Pensioner grumbling about the size of his berth but not the portions of food (Mr Boland); a black nanny (Ms Williams); a begging punk and a psychotically distressed Lebanese (both by the excellent newcomer Adam Kotz). A set piece by all the company of a Narcotics Anonymous meeting (K & C has the highest rate of addicts and alcoholics in London) lent an air of credibility to an evening which is pleasant and beautifully acted under Simon Curtis' direction but fatally doodly and universalised.

EDINBURGH

Open letter
to Yevgeni
Yevtushenko

Angus Calder

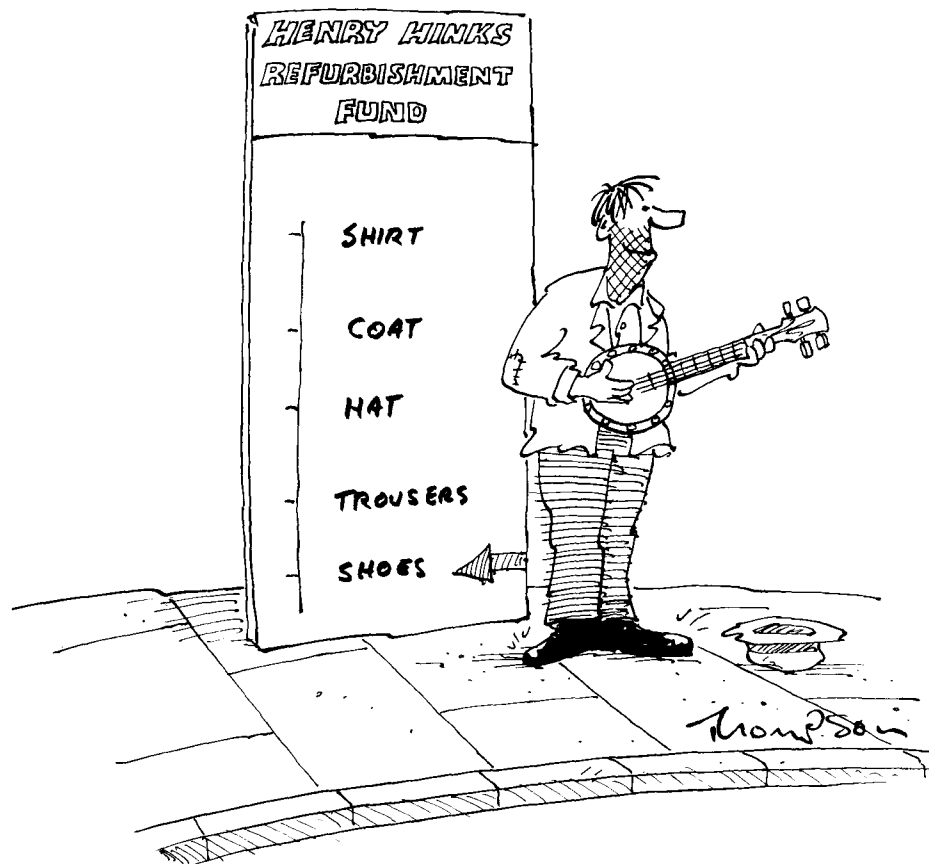
DEAR MR YEVTUSHENKO, it was a privilege to meet you again after 25 years. That student magazine I gave you containing your poem 'Koshueti' was my souvenir (as I hope it will now be yours) of a thrilling occasion when you read in the Cambridge Union—an angry, generous young man from Siberia. Your declamation seemed to shake the walls and galleries of an institution which represented the elitist, male-chauvinist fustiness at the heart of British political life. A few years later, as you have just reminded me, you had the honour of being denounced by Bernard Levin, a man never frightened to raise his voice in defence of the strong against the weak. Some people still believe that you must be evil because you have not been detained by the Soviet state. But I was glad to see one of Britain's best poets, Carol Rumens, warmly acknowledging your humanity in her *Observer* review of your new book *Almost at the End*.*

I'm eager to read it. Throughout a hopeful week when you and a dozen distinguished Soviet colleagues were reading and discussing in the Edinburgh Festival, I was remembering your poem 'People', which moved me so much those many years ago and still does now:

In any man who dies there dies with him
his first snow and kiss and fight . . .
Not people die but worlds die in them.

Poetry and the other arts make it possible to imagine, share and preserve worlds. Perhaps the most astonishing feat of imagination on show in our current Festival is *Le Lavoir*. Our Traverse Theatre has imported this French production by Théâtre de la Basoche. Twelve women act out a day's work and talk in a washhouse in August 1914. The news that war has broken out is given maximum dramatic impact by the arrival of one of their husbands, a male intrusion. By this time one feels one has got to know a dozen people of different time, country and sex as well as they know each other. The offer of their world is so fresh, so spontaneous-seeming that days later I have only just realised that the play has authors — Dominique Durvin and Hélène Prevost.

I know you got to a football match in Glasgow, but fear you must have missed *Le Lavoir* and other surprises and delights of which I have barely space to tell you. I know I've missed a lot myself — one can't be in two places at once, a point to which I will return. But I did catch the remarkable *Chakravuha*, a beautifully devised reworking of a Hindu epic by Chorus Theatre from Manipur, India. In our Jazz Festival, I've heard an amazing Pole who plays kazoo for a band called Prowizorka and such great US veterans as Jay McShann and Al Casey. The Stockholm Folk Opera's *Magic Flute* which has been charming full houses at Leith Theatre takes a wilfully perverse view of the text, but bubbles with such vitality that one's love of Mozart is enhanced.



I'm very sorry that my own background involvement in the *Rum and Scotch* event at our ever-popular Book Festival prevented me from attending your own readings that day. I wish you could have heard Jean Breeze, Grace Nichols and John Agard from the Caribbean perform their verse with intense dynamism, a challenge to which four excellent Scottish poets rose fully. One of these was Liz Lochhead, whose new play *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* has been a smash hit. It is brilliantly produced by Gerry Mulgrew for Comunicado, one of our local travelling companies. I've always thought Mary a bore, but an excellent young cast succeed in humanising her and such grim personalities as John Knox and Bothwell. Another triumph is Tilda Swinton's performance at the Traverse in *Man to Man: A One Woman Show* by the German playwright Manfred Karge. After her husband's death, a crane driver's wife is forced to take on his job and his macho personality. And so, eventually, to serve in Nazi uniform. The play comments bitterly on male values in the context of some of our evil century's worst horrors.

The topic of that 'Round Table' conference at which I met you was culture in the 'USSR Now'. Everyone there must have been hoping that *glasnost* will somehow reduce the danger of an even more lethal Third World War. You and your colleagues did an excellent job of convincing us that *glasnost* is genuine. But the sessions which I was able to attend made me feel strangely uneasy. Recording impressions of a week's Festival has helped me to work out why. In 'Koshueti' you wrote of poets and painters as 'creators of the invisible change'. What I missed at the conference was a feeling of that, or of a deep sharing of worlds. The Table was not 'Round'. It was a platform. At each session there were what seemed to be an enormous number of Soviet and British participants. Each had to speak. Each had to be interpreted (I'm recalling the Museum venue here) by a charming young woman. Otherwise, overwhelmingly, you were men.

I got to two of the readings by Soviet writers: four men. Your poet Oleg Chukhonsev is someone whose work we all must read here. So is the Georgian novelist Iskander, whose Gogol-esque account of the negroes who proudly live in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Abkhazia made me laugh as much as anything in the Festival. But you heard how Neal Ascherson made the 'Round Table' gasp when he said we were conferring here in a small country of five million people. Scotland is not an 'autonomous republic', but its situation has affinities with those of Estonia, say, or Abkhazia. A person, however much she or he travels, can only be alive at any one moment in one place. Small countries are big to those of us who live in them. Perhaps it is easier to be human in small countries which couldn't conceivably gain from big war. Perhaps it is easier, also, if you're a woman.

You asked me where the Scottish writers were. I joked that you were too famous — they were frightened to approach you. But of course the fact was that those who weren't carrying forward the invisible change at home were busy sharing worlds with others on the Fringe. Please come back one day when people are less distracted. I hope that *glasnost* implies that we will soon hear your women poets, not as part of a big delegation, but

in ones and twos. And that you yourself will sit in an Edinburgh pub or Glasgow restaurant talking as freely with other writers as you did with me. □

*Marion Boyars, £10.95

EDINBURGH

Causes without a rebel

Judith Williamson

AT THE EDINBURGH Film Festival we're now halfway through the Scottish Association of Workshops' 'Any Voices Left' event — a series of screenings and discussions of work from film and video workshops throughout the UK.

The workshops have become the main infrastructure of independent film and video production in Britain and owe their current strength to two particular achievements which have been the result of years of organisation among the independent sector. One is the ACTT agreement allowing workshops to waive union rates (which would otherwise push production costs out of their reach) and the other is the franchise system whereby certain workshops — about 20 in all — receive revenue funding from sources such as local authorities, the British Film Institute and Channel Four, thus enabling their members to function on regular salaries and maintain equipment, etc. independently of the production of any particular film.

Not all workshops are fortunate enough to be enfranchised in this way and that in itself creates enormous differences between, at one end of the spectrum, small local groups trying to produce, for example, community video, and at the other workshops who, with Channel Four money, are making full-length feature films aimed at a much wider audience both on TV and in the cinema.

What has struck me most forcibly over the last year, and now at the festival, is the way in which the enormous and valuable efforts put into setting up the workshops — plus the fact that they spring from the most consciously 'political' (i.e. left-wing) part of British film culture — have led to a situation where being in a workshop seems such a right-on thing in itself that criticism of their aims and methods, and of their products, is both hard to make and — it seems — to take.

Not that there is any obvious uniformity throughout the sector — on the contrary, the gap between the wealthier workshops now producing fiction features and those struggling with small-scale productions is enormous. This is particularly evident at Edinburgh, where a feature like Frontroom's *The Love Child* is showing in the main festival while — so far — the Workshops Event screenings have consisted of documentary and campaigning films (though the two areas are straddled by a film like *T Dan Smith* which is to be discussed at the event tomorrow). At a time when the top and bottom seem to be pulling apart in our society and culture, this is happening in independent film too. At the 'top' end of the sector there is a drive towards increasingly 'respectable' forms aimed at wider audiences; at the other end the drive towards community access and low-budget campaigning projects produces more downmarket work whose look and purpose are

utterly different.

Yet these two ends of the spectrum have one thing in common: a lack of formal innovation. I am well aware of having criticised various attempts to produce formally innovative work — Sankofa's *Passion of Remembrance* comes to mind — but this was not for the attempt itself: and in fact the rarer attempts at formal experimentation are, the less likely they are to be successful, precisely because the necessary environment of shared experiment and critical debate is missing. For the fiction work which many groups are now making is fairly conventional — albeit interesting and/or 'political' (I would put *The Love Child* — a successful comedy — in this category). Especially with so much TV money going into bigger-scale workshop films, the pull towards conventional structures is strong. And there is also the feeling, in this late '80s climate, that giving up 'avant-garde' notions of experimentation is somehow *grown-up*.

In a different way, the worthy low-budget campaigning films are also all too often conventional, indistinguishable from the more uninspired TV documentaries full of talking heads and shaky footage of political events. (A notable exception at the Workshops event was the Glasgow Film and Video Workshop's witty and accessible housing campaign film, *About the Hoose*.) Where these function in an immediate political context, their lack of formal interest is a minor issue compared with their polemical role: at this moment, for example, the most boringly filmed talking head interview with a black South African miner would have enormous political power. But perhaps the value of this kind of work is in the timing: spend too long in the cutting room with your strike/demo/uprising footage and the moment will have passed where simple reportage has a dramatic role to play. Equally, 'community videos', while often providing a valuable experience for the people involved, may be less interesting when taken outside the immediate context of their making.

In a bizarrely contradictory session, we watched Ceddo's powerful documentary *The People's Account*, redressing the media reportage of the 'riots' on Broadwater Farm (itself a good example of a conventionally made film whose political unconventionality has been strong enough to get it banned — the IBA refused to screen it). Later in the same session we saw a community video from a Welsh housing estate, which had been made by tenants with help from a local workshop, Red

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Flannel, specifically to redress their sense of grievance at being compared to Broadwater Farm on a TV programme. Such was the feeling of achievement that the video had actually been made, that attempts to pinpoint the political contradictions of its relation to Broadwater Farm were met by a walk-out of the (understandably) hurt video-makers.

If this conflict made anything vividly clear, it was that access *is* important — whether by small groups or wealthier workshops — but it is not *enough*: what you make is as important as the fact that you make it. Maybe a festival, with its self-congratulatory atmosphere, is hardly the place to say this; but somehow it makes me want to say it all the more. ☐

I made a factual mistake in this column the week before last: besides the Ethnic Advisory Officer, the BFI has one senior black employee.

TELEVISION

Matter of power

Diane Abbott

MIAMI VICE (BBC1) — THAT enjoyable if vacuous series about two detectives based in Miami, Florida — has weak scripts, nil character development and the Miami it portrays is a *Midsummer Nights Dream* version of reality. It is

shot like a series of pop videos — one rock tune follows another with pictures slotted in accordingly — which must be a winning formula in America, where the successful MTV channel consists of nothing but pop videos all day long. But it is *beautifully* photographed and directed, and has an authentically sexy male lead in Don Johnson who plays Sonny Crockett.

Curiously, Johnson's sex appeal is much the same as his female equivalents in series like *Charlie's Angels*: streaked blond hair, silk clothes clinging suggestively and no brains at all.

Equinox — Turbo Made to Measure (C4) was a very average documentary, about developing racing car engines, made by the independent company Uden Associates. There is a myth that small independent companies *necessarily* make better and more innovative programmes than the BBC or the ITV companies. That is the reason given for BBC and ITV being pressured to accept more programmes from the independents. But, as *Equinox* showed, independents can make just as mediocre programmes as anyone else.

The real reason that the government is so keen on small independents is that it sees them as the thin end of a wedge that will force a move away from the current situation, of a carefully regulated broadcasting system with a large public service element, to an almost entirely unregulated system. This would provide almost unlimited opportunities for profit-making, lowest-common-denominator programmes. And public service broadcasting would become completely

marginal, as it is in America.

As a fan of Fay Weldon's novels I was looking forward to watching the repeat of **Lives and Loves of a She-Devil** (BBC1), which was based on her book. Generally, I was not disappointed; on its own terms the play succeeded admirably. But it did show that it is virtually impossible to replicate, in a television play, the literary effects of a novel.

Where the novel was subtle and delicately ironic, the television version was mannered and rather obviously satirical. It was also a little unbalanced by the fact that the male characters were brought into full focus, whereas the men in Fay Weldon's books are always slightly two-dimensional. However, I loved it. It was funny, gripping, cleverly directed and Julie T. Wallace as the She-Devil was excellent.

Fay Weldon is a great phrase-maker and the play did preserve some of the best of her lines. One of my favourites is the She-Devil's remark when she has spent years and made (literally) super-human efforts to wreak her revenge on her husband's mistress, get him back and, above all, put him in the same passive, dependent relationship to her as she was originally to him. She reflects: 'I had thought it was a matter of male and female but it was merely a matter of power.'

Wesley Kerr's films on racial disadvantage for **Newsnight** (BBC2) were models of their kind: well-researched, analytical and carefully constructed. Shown on two successive nights, the first one set out the extent of racism in Britain. It was interesting to hear the black Liberal candidate in the last election, Zerbarnoo Gifford (clever, nice, ex-Roedean and always a model of moderation), remark that she experienced this election as much more racist on the ground than others that she had fought as a candidate.

The second film explored the American experiences of contract compliance as a practical way government can fight racism in employment. This is a policy where firms who get government contracts are required to employ reasonable numbers of black people. There were interesting interviews with American contractors and the impressive black mayor of Chicago, Herald Washington. And a clear case was made for a similar policy in the United Kingdom.

These were the kind of carefully-crafted current affairs films which are a feature of the BBC's output. But, if rumour is to be believed, we will see less of this kind of film in the future, while *Newsnight* in its present form may be for the chop. If this happens, it will be justified with the (now standard) propaganda about 'the crisis on BBC current affairs'. The truth is that current affairs films like Wesley Kerr's pose certain problems for the new powers-that-be at the BBC. On one hand, they are expensive. They tie up far more resources than, for instance, the *Weekend World*-style format — and the current round of 're-organisation' will ultimately be about cuts. Furthermore, they are risky: if you let reporters loose on the world to find out what is happening, who knows what uncomfortable facts they might bring back. Hence, an unkind observer might think, the pressure for a method of work where the script is written before so much as a foot of film is shot — much easier to censor. ☐

Diane Abbott is MP for Hackney North. Next week, writer Hanif Kureishi casts his eye at the small screen.

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Prudence Farmer Poetry Prize

Fleur Adcock

The Prudence Farmer Prize of £100 — more modest than the Booker, it's true, but infinitely more select — is awarded each year for the best poem, in the judge's opinion, to have appeared in the New Statesman during the previous 12 months. This year's winner is ALAN BROWNJOHN for 'The Day of the Asterisk', published in our issue of 1 May and reproduced below

AS THIS YEAR'S judge I'm doing a job which is steadily being phased out. In 1975 the first judge, Peter Porter, was faced with more than 100 poems — roughly two per issue of the *New Statesman*. Twelve years later, after regular annual reductions, the number is 38. At this rate a point will be reached, around 1995, when the prize will automatically award itself to the *New Statesman*'s sole annual poem.

Although I'm not yet redundant, the present relatively modest sample gives insufficient grounds for a general survey of the State of the Poem, as practised in earlier years. I shall also refrain from characterising the magazine's own poetic house-style, or summing up the findings of previous judges. Instead, let's look at some of the themes in my batch. There's a certain amount of violent death, but no elegies or expressions of personal grief. There's sex — well, there always is, but here most of it happens offstage (I'll come to an exception later). There's politics of a socially-aware, *New Statesman*-like kind: Carol Ann Duffy's powerfully imagined 'Foreign', about being an immigrant, and two being-British-in-America poems by Gareth Reeves ('Freshman English, USA, 1970': the Vietnam draft) and Lachlan Mackinnon ('Stirring Times in 1963': black riots), both reflecting the guiltily marginal status of the visitor who misses the action.

Then there are French cafés: no fewer than three of these (I identify Stephen Romer's as French by hindsight, having also met it in the context of his book), plus a pub or two, an airport restaurant and a theatre bar full of cockroaches. This last is by courtesy of Fiona Pitt-Kethley, who has good ideas for poems but then isn't sure how to go about the actual process of writing them, and plods on in vague pentameters until she runs out of things to say (in mid-line, on this occasion). Given a choice of vermin I'd go for Richard Tyrrell's rats: he invests the dissection of 'soricine abdomina' with a novel charm, but his poem turns gooey at the end.

This judging business infects my prose with negatives and reservations. I could say that Rachel McCarron's 'My Slow Child's First Steps' was

appealing but suffered, technically, from a wobbliness akin to that of its subject; or that the versification in Matthew Sweeney's 'A Postcard of a Hanging' struck me as disappointingly flabby; or that Julie O'Callaghan's 'Moon Message' didn't quite get through to me; or that Russell Lucas can't handle commas. But who wants to go on finding fault? So, to be positive, here's some (more) of what I liked.

John Levett (a previous Prudence Farmer prizewinner) won this year's Yorkshire Open Poetry Competition with 'Stag', which features, among other attractions, the removal of a used Durex: 'A handful of genetic slack/Runs down its screwed-up cul-de-sac.' 'Stag' should have appeared in the *Yorkshire Post* but, although this is the year of the condom, that paper evidently felt unable to shoulder its public duty. Tough on its readers, who might have enjoyed the poem. I did, but John Levett has won enough prizes for the moment.

I also enjoyed Alison Smith's baton-twirling little sister in 'What You're Given', Jonathan Steffen's elegant sonnet 'German Hunting Party', Simon Rae's 'Jumping in the Lake', and Aelmuire Cleary's 'All His Own Work', in which the confident, self-made man falls asleep over a telephone book and leaves the onlooker at a loss: 'I can no longer feel pleasantly young and unreliable,/but suddenly I am as old as time/and responsible, the only one left awake.' And I was inexplicably and perhaps irrationally charmed by the use of the asterisk in Peter Harley's 'If I Was the Mayor of Mexico City', which goes on: 'I

wouldn't learn to speak Spanish./I'd say: holez amigos, no comprendez./This problem is bigger than Baghdad*.' (Footnote: '*The poet would previously have been mayor of Baghdad.') Then, in the final cluster but not quite making it to the winning-post, we have Paul Muldoon. He was similarly placed in 1984, when Michael Hofmann felt he couldn't give a prize to 'something that eluded me quite so much'. Well, Paul Muldoon's current poem 'Profumo' doesn't elude me, perhaps because he (unlike Paul May, one of the more ingenious but more impenetrable of the poets new to me in this batch) has been around long enough to have educated us in his procedures. It's a perfectly satisfactory poem, a vignette of maternal snobbery and adolescent angst: it's just that they can't all win.

My dilemma deepens with Blake Morrison, who has two perfectly satisfactory poems on one page (published in May, the month of *Poetry Live*, for which our poetry editor seems to have saved some of the best contributions). The fact that there are two makes it, if anything, harder to settle for either of them, involving as it does a choice between 'Proserpina in the Oilfields' (female personnel officer stuck in Aberdeen for six months) and 'Fitter'. Both very 1980s, both admirable in their ways. But are they just a little too admirable? Has Blake Morrison tried too hard to think himself into the female character, seeing her heart 'thinning out . . . /Like a rubber glove left too near the gas-ring'? Is the image of the fitter drilling a bolthole through a partition just too neat an analogy for half-glimpsed understandings

The day of the asterisk

Alan Brownjohn

The music stops in mid-bar on the PA,
So all the customers realise there was music
And wonder what comes now. 'Will Mrs Gurnard
Come to the Manager's office, will Mrs Gurnard
Come to the Manager's office. Thank you.' Click,
And the music starts again. Therefore she swivels
Round to tell Tamsin to stay with the cash desk,
And strides off smiling* down a glade of coats
To do the thing for which she has been thanked.
The customers themselves feel thanked for suffering
A remission of the music which they hardly
Knew they were hearing. This is the Summer Sale.

*She smiles at the girl on the cosmetics,
Penned in among the scents and paints and creams,
Who returns her a tanned and haggard look
Expensively reproaching anyone
Who passes, and will not be beautiful.
She smiles through the cafeteria swing doors,
And she smiles at Trevor with his agreements,
Imprisoned by some thirty capering screens.
At any second, somewhere in the world,
You can push a flat square button and get the sound
Of an audience screaming with happiness.
She pushes the bell for the Manager's happy smile.

between the haves and the have-nots? Probably not: as I've said, I'm fighting off negativity.

However, I feel entirely positive about a poem of which (to revert to my newfound enchantment with asterisks) the whole second half is a footnote. Alan Brownjohn has cornered a particular area of urban life — banal, commercial, second-rate, uneasy with compromise. His people have jobs but are required to be grateful for them; they pretend to feel safe. In 'The Day of the Asterisk' the matter-of-fact, teasingly pedantic tone and subtly-contrived architecture of the poem usher us through musak and hypocritical jollity to a moment just before the point when, we feel certain, something appalling is going to happen. □

Fleur Adcock has most recently edited The Faber Book of 20th-Century Women's Poetry, reviewed further on in these pages.

THEY FUCK YOU UP

Trains and quotes and pains

Robert Sheppard

Collected Poems

ELIZABETH JENNINGS *Carcanet* £5.95

Open Country

JOHN WAIN *Hutchinson* £5.95

Letter from Tokyo

ANTHONY THWAITE *Hutchinson* £5.95

The Old Flea-Pit

ALAN BROWNJOHN *Hutchinson* £5.95

Funeral Games

VERNON SCANNELL *Robson Books* £6.95

Late Pickings

GAVIN EWART *Hutchinson* £5.95

THE POETRY OF the Movement orthodoxy won't go away: Larkin's death clearly wasn't the end of it. Indeed, in some of these recent books, Larkin is an excuse for pious, elegaic production by some of his followers. They mourn him, rightly, as a more consummate poet. 'I do not want him to be dead!' pleads Vernon Scannell, as if the whole thing might not function without Larkin. But, obviously, it does.

As one might expect, these poets broadly share a faith in a poetry of anecdote and measured tone, in which irony is used to both project and shield a reserved self. There is an ambivalent respect for traditional form: Anthony Thwaite has a 'sort of ballade' and Gavin Ewart produces a 'so-called sonnet'. Themes recur, too. These poets are all getting on a bit and can celebrate a pivotal birthday — whether 52 or 61 — with ironic resignation. Schooldays become a source of nostalgic epiphany (those fragrant schoolmarmes who first stirred the male poets' sexuality!); elderly relatives offer easily exploitable pathos. Dying — not death — is popular, particularly terminal illnesses in dehumanised hospitals (a Larkin prop). When this personal vein is exhausted, there's a mine of information in newspapers (particularly in headlines and personal ads) to provide epigraphs, odd lines and

even whole poems. However, explanatory footnotes are generally more interesting than the poems which trump up facts into style.

Of the poets here, Elizabeth Jennings is the most serious, even dreadfully so. Eclipsed by her fellow male Movement poets, and separated from them by a lyrical and mystical streak, it is right that a new **Collected Poems** should redress the injustice. Her work has shown various attempts at escaping the Movement style, although the vatic sweep of the early 'Song for a Birth or a Death' still strains in its rhythmical and tonal prison.

Last night I saw the savage world
And heard the blood beat up the stair;
The fox's bark, the owl's shrewd pounce,
The crying creatures — all were there,
And men in bed with love and fear.

Her Catholicism was allowed full expression in such poems as 'To a Friend with a Religious Vocation' but, within a few years, the release from social decorum in subject matter led to the more 'confessional' 'On a Friend's Relapse and Return to a Mental Clinic'. However, she is not a Lowell or Plath. The middle poems, which deal with mental illness, maintain a cool compassion while negotiating fear, dread and oblivion. These subjects, which Larkin addresses from the outside, are addressed repeatedly by Jennings from the inside, as it were, and they remain thematic throughout the book. In the face of a retiring deity, opportunities for epiphany are few: 'Even in spring I see an elegy.' Later poems display a rhythmical variety, allowing a more relaxed voice, but it is often Movement through and through in its use of 'we' as a rhetorical-moral embrace that can pre-empt a reader's free response:

We are nothing, we are
A dream in a cosmic mind,
We are a solitude, an emptiness,
We only exist in others' thought . . . Why
Are we set here, frightened of our reflections,
Living in fear yet desperate not to die?

John Wain's latest collection, **Open Country**, abandons the conciseness of Movement structure in a long 'grab bag' poem called 'Mid-Week Period Return: *Home Thoughts of a Native*'. The title, however, recalls Larkin's Whitsun journey and Donald Davie's 'stopping train', and introduces a train-ride meditation through provincial England which turns out to be a hymn of praise to Betjamen, Larkin and Auden rather than an exploration of personal history. In 'As a Child, I Saw the R101' he does write of a point where public and private histories meet, though quite ineffectually; he matches E.J. Thribb: 'So farewell, R101, flimsy enfolder/of a race's reveries.' Anthony Thwaite travels farther afield in **Letter from Tokyo**, but the failure of the reasonableness of Movement rhetoric to deal with the unthinkable is all too apparent in 'Hiroshima':

No way to deal with it, no way at all.
We did not have to come, and yet we came.
The things we saw were all the very same
As we expected. We had seen them all.

Better are the nine long narratives, 'Voices Through Clouds', which deal with various cultural clashes of East and West: from stories of early Christianised Japan to — more drolly — a dialogue between a Buddhist Abbess and William Faulkner.

The contemporary world is brought into focus in Alan Brownjohn's **The Old Flea-Pit**, which is voyeuristic as well as anecdotal: desire is always thrashing against its conventional restraint. In 'Politics', opposed police and pickets line up while the narrator meditates upon a girl in the foreground. The ironies of a dramatised self cannot engage with the political, which would require conceptual thought to invade the purity of poetic style. At one point, in 'The Exit of Dr Fitzsimmon', its hero, an academic, escapes a symposium on 'the *deconstruction* of syllabuses'; this fashionable word, used ironically but without a clear focus, points to whole areas of knowledge excluded from all these poets' limiting empiricism. But at least Brownjohn is not as bad as Scannell who, in his unpretentious but unmemorable **Funeral Games**, can present media images as though they were unmediated:

the unembellished truth
Of newsreels is presented, images
Of famine, torture, violence in the streets.

Gavin Ewart knows those streets and the media in which they figure, but the Instant Response Unit of his pen can match any impulse, let alone image, he finds there with a poem. The result in **Late Pickings** is a technically accomplished poetry completely devoid of thought, with easy morality on tap for more serious topics and dismissive levity for minor ones. In his elegy for Larkin, Ewart imagines him suffering religion's 'non-stop non-extinction'. Perhaps Larkin looks down in amazement at the results of his poetic legacy, his own words on his lips: 'Still going on, all of it, still going on!' □

O FAT WHITE WOMAN

Not a muse

Margaret Mulvihill

Feminism and Poetry

JAN MONTEFIORE *Pandora* £4.95

The Faber Book of 20th-century Women's Poetry

ed. FLEUR ADCOCK *Faber* £9.95 & £4.95

Private Parts

FIONA PITT-KETHLEY *Chatto* £4.95

Love, Death and the Changing of the Seasons

MARILYN HACKER *Onlywomen Press* £4.95

New and Selected Poems

MOLLY HOLDEN *Carcanet* £6.95

EVEN WITH THE HELP of her generous elucidation of Lacanian calisthenics, I was not always up to Jan Montefiore's **Feminism and Poetry**. But here's a little of what I did manage. Women's poetry has been marginalised in criticism. If not ignored or under-valued, it's read for evidence of eccentricity and/or neurosis. The principal challenge has come from American radical feminist writers, notably Adrienne Rich. According to them, poetry is 'the stuff of experience rendered into speech; a woman's poems are the authentic speech of her life and being'. But, for the fastidious Montefiore, that won't do at all. Apart from their narrow definition of the female experience, the exponents of this new

tradition re-introduce a tired Romantic role for the poet as a transcendent representative of (female) humanity. And it cannot cope with the 'possibly non-feminist material produced by women poets'. But neither does Montefiore have much time for the I'm-alright-Jills: successful women poets who idealise a mainstream tradition that only grudgingly endorses them.

In her anthology of **20th-Century Women's Poetry** in English, Fleur Adcock deals briskly with such critical dilemmas. It's true that women poets have been under-rated and that they have suffered unduly from the 'delayed-appearance syndrome'. But there is no particular tradition of women's poetry and, anyhow, 'most real poets address themselves to both sexes or to an audience which they have not attempted to define at all'. She has therefore produced a 'healthy sample' of poetry that is pragmatically limited by history — poems written by women born after 1945 are not included. But since, as Montefiore would insist and Adcock would agree, being female has at least as much (if not more) significance for a writer as being, say, American, this anthology can be satisfyingly raided with feminist intent.

How would the womancultists deal with Frances Cornford's 'To a Fat Lady Seen from the Train': 'O why do you walk through the fields in gloves, / Missing so much and so much? / O fat white woman whom nobody loves . . . ?' A case of false consciousness perhaps? Anna Wickham's 'Nervous Prostration' would present fewer problems to the pious reader:

I married a man of the Croydon class
When I was twenty-two.
And I vex him, and he bores me
Till we don't know what to do!

The hard stuff of a woman's experience has a place in this anthology of traditional excellence. Elma Mitchell goes for Ruskin's jugular when she substitutes, for his roses and lilies, soap and blood:

Tugging, folding, tucking, zipping, buttoning,
Spoonng in food, encouraging excretion,
Mopping up vomit, stabbing cloth with needles . . .

And Gwendolyn Brooks' 'The Mother' is no crooner of lullabies: 'Abortions will not let you forget. / You remember the children you got that you did not get . . .'. While, in her 'Warning', Jenny Joseph anticipates a delinquent old age when she'll learn to spit and pick flowers from other people's gardens.

Adcock's biggies are Marianne Moore, Stevie Smith, Sylvia Plath and Elizabeth Bishop, who disliked women's anthologies because 'art is art' and 'to separate writings, paintings, musical compositions, etc., into two sexes is to emphasise values in them that are *not* art'. But the mighty Adrienne Rich is also well represented and her 'Aunt Jennifer's Tigers' are an antidote to the fat white woman.

If women's poetry were simply the stuff of their experience rendered into speech, all of Fiona Pitt-Kethley's **Private Parts** would do nicely. As it is, the best poems in this collection come out of her painterly self — 'Still Life' and 'Private Parts' — or her outlaw girlhood: 'Baby Doll'. In the likes of 'Post Mortem' and 'A Touch of Class' she does distill the stuff for a good laugh at your body-building premature-ejaculator's expense but, alas, she does not sing. Several of Pitt-Kethley's

poems address things on Montefiore's critical mind, such as the muzzling effect of poetry (the Muse) being supposedly female, the poet male.

I have to work at poems, draft after draft.
Some days are good. Others are bad —
when I'm too cold, too tired to do things easily.
(Women, of course, don't have the wherewithal
to please the Muse — we all know that from Graves.
So I *can't* be authentically inspired.)

The Muse is unproblematic for Marilyn Hacker and, although **Love, Death and the Changing of the Seasons** is wholly modern in tone and language, its author's batteries are charged with the tradition of Shakespeare, Blake, Yeats and Pound. This Navratilova of the sonnet tells of the beginning, middle and end of her love affair with a younger woman. Gourmets and gourmands alike should be pleased by her poem-novella, which is written with a thrilling ease of style and laced with food and sex, as well as the stuff of a high-powered literary lady's life on both sides of the Atlantic.

An entirely different, ever so English voice is that of Molly Holden, one of whose poems makes it into the Adcock anthology. With a fine lens that focuses on the jack-knifing hare's 'huge heroics', the 'partiality of light' for a decaying barn roof, the new-born baby's 'withered face of fury', even a clothes-line 'on which the tea towels stir, the peg-bag weighs', Holden's **Selected Poems** make her readers 'plural with participation'.

It's still sometimes suggested that women writers suffer from the narrowness of their experiential stuff — we don't go off to war or on big-game hunts — but Holden's vision was further refined by multiple sclerosis:

There is a virtue in
this necessity. I get to know
a tree trunk at the verge
as if I'd lived a lifetime
in its shade — disposition
of branches, ribbed bark,
the small rough leaves.

Holden, Hacker and Pitt-Kethley are about as different as you could get in terms of generation, class and sexual preference. Unless you need to be coherent, simply celebrating their multiplicity of discourses shouldn't be a problem. □

Margaret Mulvihill's second novel, *Low Overheads*, is published next month by Pandora.

NEWS OF THE WORLD

Escape artist

John Lucas

Meeting the British

PAUL MULDOON *Faber* £9.95 & £3.95

Home and Away

STEVE ELLIS *Bloodaxe* £4.50

Skedaddle

JOHN LEVETT *Peterloo Poets* £4.50

Ivy Leaves & Arrows

MAURA DOOLEY *Bloodaxe* £1.50

LIKE ITS PREDECESSORS, Paul Muldoon's new volume, **Meeting the British**, is full of poems

whose real subject seems to be how to write a poem. I don't at all mean that Muldoon apes those old-new American writers whose only subject was poetry (didn't they *do* any living?); the point is rather that a Muldoon poem invariably has a canny, almost wittily defiant air about it, a manner of implying that neither it nor its author will allow themselves to be docketed as this or that kind of Irish performance.

And yet, paradoxically, Muldoon's poems are wonderfully adroit performances, whose absorbed perceptions and habits can feel close to aesthetic heartlessness but only, perhaps, to the drab certainties of bourgeois moralists. 'Sushi' begins with someone saying: 'Why do we waste so much Time arguing,' and the same voice returns at later points to complain, with justice, of an absence of talk, of love. Meanwhile, the protagonist is attentiveness itself, as he studies the 'translucent strips/of octopus,/squid and conger,/pickled ginger/and pale-green horseradish . . .'. In 'Overlooking the River Stour' Hardy gazed intently and guiltily at what was before him in order not to have to think about what was behind him — a woman, whose love no longer interested him. The rhythms and vocabulary of that poem are clinically, obsessively exact. 'Sushi', by contrast, is distinguished by its teasing rhymes, the susurrus of its vocables, its untroubled relishing of the actual. These are all Muldoon trademarks and, if they remind us of MacNeice (they should), they also remind us of how we still badly underrate that poet, whose own refusal to be pinned down doesn't so much marginalise him, as has often enough been asserted, as call into question the worth of such terms as centrality and relevance.

At all events, there is nothing marginal about Muldoon's way of writing. His apparent in-directions and inconsequentialities compose a rich testimony to things being various. They operate to great effect in such elegies as 'The Soap-Pig' and 'Brock', the latter of which brilliantly telescopes a series of imaginings about the badger's 'underground' encounter with the disasters of 20th-century history: 'this old brock's/been to Normandy and back/through the tunnels and trenches/of his subconscious./His father fell victim/to mustard-gas at the Somme.' It ends as a loving, wry vision of his recently-dead father:

in his Sunday's suit's
bespoke lime and lignite,
patrolling his now-diminished estate
and taking stock of this and that.

'Profumo', whose technique and manner are derived from the earlier and even finer 'Cuba', begins: 'My mother had slapped a month-long embargo/on his very name. The inhalation/of my first, damp/menthol fag behind the Junior Common Room'. Forbidden delights are tasted not just in the cigarette itself but, I imagine, in the French word for smoking; and they are further hinted at in the 'spontaneously-combustible *News of the World*/under my mother's cushions/as she shifted from ham to snobbish ham'. The *News of the World* famously carried Christine Keeler's version of her affair with Profumo: the mother may be trying to hide her own discomfort at having been caught reading it or is refusing her son a glance at its pages. Then she chides him for his own, innocent, adolescent crush: 'Away and read

Masefield's *Cargoes*. It's explosively comic, this appeal to a bracing poem as a way of banishing impure thoughts. And it's one way of meeting the British.

Another way is contained in the volume's teasing title-poem. I assume that it's told from the standpoint of a French-speaking Indian in 18th-century Canada, who encounters 'at the dead of winter' General Jeffrey Amhurst and Colonel Henry Boquet, neither of whom 'could stomach our willow-tobacco', nor the use of French, and who 'gave us six fishhooks/and two blankets embroidered with smallpox'. The stupidity and malevolence of the gift say a good deal about the nature and character of British Imperialism.

Such a manner of saying is at the polar extreme from direct utterance. And this is the concern of the volume's long, closing poem sequence, '7 Middagh Street', the house in New York where Auden presided over a strange collection of writers and free spirits and where he came to reject the 'loose, immodest tone', as he chose to see it, of his earlier political poetry. The sequence includes pastiches of Muldoon's contemporaries and turns repeatedly about the responsibilities of the artist to art and to politics, to his dreams: 'If Yeats had saved his pencil-lead/would certain men have stayed in bed?' Technically, intellectually and imaginatively, the sequence is an extraordinary achievement, perhaps the finest of Muldoon's long poems, just as *Meeting the British* may be the best of his five full volumes of poetry. Certainly, it's head and shoulders above anything else so far published this year.

This is not to deny that the other volumes under review have their merits. Steve Ellis is very much a Bloodaxe poet: toughly comic, anti-metropolitan, often verbally exuberant in his reports on one provincial's experience of contemporary *mores*. In 'An Encounter' the poet glances over a sectarian magazine, 'Awake! trophy of battle,/among sleepy commuters', and notes its vision of

humanity dancing out of its bed
to the chimes of a cosmic alarm-clock
to cuddle tigers in Eden. I think
I think these are admirable notions,
but rather ridiculous too:
thus maintaining the flexibility
of the balanced point of view.

Except, of course, that the knowing irony of this can't support such 'flexibility' and Ellis is perhaps too ready to knock down the target figures his poems begin by propping up. On other occasions he can speak vaguely of 'England's unjust, maddening beauty' in a manner suggesting that the hard-boiled exterior conceals a soft centre. Nevertheless, *Home and Away* has a number of successful, good poems: they include 'Ad Patram', 'Roles', 'Visiting Home' and the very funny 'St Francis's "Cantico di frate sole" done into Hollywood gangsterese'.

Just the space to welcome John Levett's accomplished second volume, *Skedaddle*, and Maura Dooley's pamphlet *Ivy Leaves & Arrows*, which, although less assured than Levett's, perhaps because she's not yet certain how to make details cohere in a poem, is notable for its efforts at attentiveness, its occasional rhythmic lift. □

John Lucas' Modern English Poetry (Batsford) is reviewed in these pages.

DULCE ET DECORUM

The long goodbye

Jon Cook

Modern English Poetry from Hardy to Hughes

JOHN LUCAS *Batsford* £14.95 & £6.95

Poetry in the Wars

EDNA LONGLEY *Bloodaxe* £12.95 & £6.95

BOTH THESE BOOKS continue a tendency in recent criticism to reclaim indigenous strengths in British poetry written over the last hundred years. Eliot and Pound are replaced as exemplary poets by writers such as Hardy, Edward Thomas, Yeats, MacNeice and Larkin who were all in different ways committed to 'traditional' form. The model of a good poem has shifted. Out goes the modernist text with its collage of quotations, fragmented form and enigmatic symbolism. In comes the 'British' poem: a subtle interplay of rhythm and syntax, of stanza and sentence structure; an elusive, provisional but always well-formed utterance, in touch with popular forms, whether ballads or supermarket shelves.

One of the many strengths of John Lucas' *Modern English Poetry* is his alertness to the ideologically charged nature of reclaiming an English poetic idiom. He acknowledges that the Englishness of English poetry can be exclusively masculine, nostalgic and racist, that its elegaic preoccupation with traditions on the verge of extinction can be little more than the sound of the well-to-do crying all the way to the bank, or a means of persuading young men to go and get themselves killed in some foreign field.

And, like the Walrus in Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* who wept over the oysters before he ate them, there is an abundance of predatory sentimentality in the poetry Lucas discusses. From Kipling's 'Recessional' to Larkin's 'Going, Going', the tears quietly flow for a fading English Empire or a hidden rural England about to be sacrificed to modern dress. But the news is not all bad. John Lucas is a tenacious and guardedly patriotic critic. He wants to establish a claim on behalf of 20th-century English poetry, not just argue against it. Through a series of finely-tuned readings of Hardy and Edward Thomas he argues that their poetry, through its technical accomplishment, its openness to voices other than the poet's own, its hesitancy and doubt, is not compromised by cloying dreams of a lost England. Moving closer to the present, he sifts through Larkin's poetry to affirm the value of poems like 'Whitsun Weddings' when Larkin surprises himself out of a querulous isolation into a solidarity with ordinary life.

Good criticism often comes out of a tension between critic and subject. In John Lucas' case there is a complex quarrel going on about the value of Englishness. His admiration for particular poems by Hardy, Thomas or Larkin meets with his reservations about the cumulative effect of their poetry. He judges Hardy a great poet but at the same time finds the secretiveness of his poetry is a cover story for what Hardy did not want to recognise: the literary and social ambition that

divorced him from the culture he appears to cherish. Like its equivalent political culture, there is a kind of English poetry that seems to thrive on secrecy and the absence of public accountability.

Lucas finds two powerful alternatives to this milieu in the poetry of Yeats and the early Auden. Yeats is obviously different, not just because to call him English is a complacent misnomer, but because of the way he worked through to a sense of the public and political responsibilities of poetry and the part it might play in the creation of a national culture. Early Auden plays the English obsession with secrecy back against itself. He participated in the rituals of Englishness only to undermine them from within. Later Auden conspired in the complacent appropriation of his work by an English cultural elite and Lucas valuably revives the sheer intransigence and committed radicalism of the early poetry. Auden discovered an idiom which revealed the hollowness of an English ideology based upon country houses, uninhabited rural landscapes and dreams of romantic love. What he heard in all this was 'The high thin rare continuous worship/Of the self absorbed.' Exactly.

Poetry in the Wars meshes together two different histories in its account of 20th-century poetry. One concerns the effect of a century of various and frequent wars on poetry written in English. The second takes war as a metaphor and argues that poetry is an art whose practice and definition is constantly contested. In particular, Edna Longley is concerned with the battle between 'traditionalists' and 'modernists'.

Longley knows which side she's on. The traditionalists, working with the disciplines of metre and stanza, are the true moderns. Her exemplary poet is Edward Thomas. Longley is probably Thomas' most able advocate and she brings out how much he achieved in the three years he wrote poetry. But I doubt that Thomas can carry the weight of importance that Longley wants him to bear. A number of his poems are part of a remarkable but unfinished experiment with the conventions of English lyric and narrative poetry. Thomas worked against the self-absorbed character of these conventions by opening his poetry to other voices. But this doesn't stop him from falling back into toe-curling poeticisms especially when his own voice is invaded by a sentimental patriotism. 'Adelstrop' may record an epiphany of England but the poem is caught in Georgian aspic.

The tension between a commitment to poetry and the loyalties imposed by a state of war links the essays collected in *Poetry in the Wars*. Writing from Northern Ireland Longley knows about the murderous power of political mythologies and she admires poets like Paul Muldoon whose oblique and parodic strategies can keep the power of these myths at bay. Poetry becomes an art of peace in the midst of war, or an art which can at least anticipate peace. However, Longley seems to see any political commitment as inevitably narrowing imagination, and this produces strangely foreshortened readings of the work of Seamus Heaney and Tom Paulin. 'Full human truth' as a phrase to belabour the work of politically committed poets is as intimidating as the worst political slogan. Such lapses are rare, though, in a book which is full of powerful arguments for the distinct strengths of poetry in modern culture. □

The Scottish Question

Dennis Canavan MP, Denny, Stirlingshire
I don't really mind Edward Pearce's feeble attempt to rubbish me, but his attempt to rubbish the case for Scottish devolution is insulting to the people of Scotland (NS 31 July).

It is rather ironic that, in a supposedly left-wing journal, an *ex-Daily Telegraph* hack should try to score a point by quoting Enoch Powell as having the last word on devolution. Powell has certainly had his last word on anything in the House of Commons and there are many who will be grateful for that. But even these who hero-worship the great guru of British Unionism must admit that expertise on Scottish politics was never one of his strong points.

Both Pearce and Powell reveal their ignorance by confusing Labour's policy on Scottish devolution with local government. The policy would not create another tier of local government but a devolved Scottish Parliament with legislative as well as economic powers. It will not take power away from local authorities but from Westminster and Whitehall. It will end the anomaly whereby the people of Scotland constitute the only nation in the world with their own laws and legal system but no legislature.

On matters affecting Scotland alone, Scottish Labour MPs, who constitute a majority in Scotland, invariably win the debates in the country and on the floor of the House. But, when it comes to the vote, we are outnumbered by English Tory MPs.

What is more sinister is the recent attempt by some English Tories to hijack Scottish Question Time. I do not know whether Edward Pearce was present at Scottish Question Time on 22 July but, if he was, he must have been asleep or still recovering from his lunch. His report clearly implies that my intervention came during the course of Question Time. In fact, I made no intervention whatsoever during Question Time for the simple reason that I, like most of my Labour colleagues, did not get the chance, despite repeated attempts to catch the Speaker's eye. By contrast, every Scottish Tory MP present managed to get called on more than one occasion.

At the end of Question Time, several Labour MPs, including me, tried to raise this with the Speaker, who, after refusing to take our points of order there and then, attempted to move on immediately to next business. The only way to stop this was by 'spying strangers'. *Hansard* records that the 'strangers' I was objecting to were the English Tory MPs who had invaded Scottish Question Time.

Of course, people like Edward Pearce would have liked us to sit like obedient zombies with not a whimper of protest. Play the Westminster game, chaps? Well, we've been playing the traditional Westminster opposition role for eight years now and it hasn't got us very far.

We should abandon the cosy debating-club conventions which facilitate the passage of parliamentary business and, like Parnell, start using more unconventional obstructive tactics. We should use every means at our disposal, inside and outside parliament, to maximise pressure on the government to deliver to the people of Scotland the socialist policies which

they voted for. The time for mere talking has ended.

Bill Speirs, Scottish Chairperson, Labour Party
I suppose it's a kind of backhanded compliment to us Scots that Edward Pearce chooses to give up part of his valuable column to attack us each week, although I don't know what we've done to deserve it.

The piece (NS 7 August) in which he asks (concerning the timing of the Scottish school holidays) 'who wants to spend much time with the children of a Scottish MP anyway?' was, I presume, a not terribly funny joke. It reminded me a bit of the equally unfunny jokes which the French make about the English being a nation of child abusers.



More serious is his persistent denigration of the Scots Labour MPs' harassment of the Tory front bench. George Galloway is right: the people of Scotland are very angry indeed at being landed with a Secretary of State who goes out of his way to describe himself as a 'colonial governor' and they expect our Labour MPs to make life for the governor as difficult as possible. Sometimes they will get the tactics wrong (as I think Dennis Canavan did at the last Scottish Questions) but they will keep fighting.

Indian independence

Rt Hon. Michael Foot MP, President, The India League

1987 is the 40th anniversary of the achievement of the independence of India. The Indian government is arranging celebrations of this event throughout India. It is hoped that there will be many similar events throughout Great Britain to commemorate this great historical event.

One of the events in this country, to be held towards the end of this year, will be a reunion of former India League activists. Many of our old friends who took part in this campaign together with Krishna Menon are still with us, and we are sure that they would like to meet their old comrades again. We have the names of quite a number of these but we would like our list to be as complete as possible.

If any of your readers who participated are interested, would they please write to Julius Silverman, India League, 97 London Fruit Exchange, Brushfield Street, London E1 6EP.

Venerable shibboleths

J. W. Hurst, West Malling, Kent

Raymond Williams' response to Terry Eagleton's question (NS 14 August) concerning the media's importance resurrected one of socialism's most venerable shibboleths — good old 'democratic control'. This is, of course, left-speak for control by us. It might have seemed desirable — even possible — to acquire such control in the early 1960s, but so much as a hint of it now will ensure Tory victories indefinitely.

Mr Williams might also reflect that all media, including the *Star* and the *News on Sunday*, answer to the most severe form of democratic control. It's known as consumer preference.

Lib-Lab divide

Cllr. Pete Smith, London Borough of Hounslow

David Howarth's comments on the Lib-Lab divide (NS 7 August) take some beating for pure nerve! Where has Mr Howarth been over the last ten years, as Liberal 'community politicians' and by-election strategists have left a trail of deceit, misrepresentation and character assassination across the British political landscape? Surely Mr Howarth is aware of the fact that Liberals have produced guides for the uninitiated as to just how *Focus* newsheets can distort the views and actions of opponents for Liberal advantage. This is not simply to say that some Liberals have behaved in a dishonest way — all parties have such people — but more importantly that such behaviour has been endorsed by the Party at a semi-official level. The Liberals are the last people who should seek to give advice to Labour on the morality of election campaigns.

I am sure that a full debate between Labour and Liberal parties about both policy and strategy would be valuable. Let it be a mature one and not the silly scoring of points which Cllr Howarth seems to favour.

Richard Exell, London SE15

Howarth exemplifies the Liberal response to anyone who wants to do a deal with them — unconditional surrender. Even the SDP, in his eyes, is only acceptable because 'many of them have become increasingly Liberal in their attitudes'. The reluctance of 43 per cent of Social Democrats to be submerged in this way is perfectly understandable. This is the main reason why Labour can't reach an agreement with the Alliance. Of course, Labour and the Alliance dislike many of the same aspects of the present government, and could agree on many of the changes we'd like to see, but any agreement would have to pay some attention to the issues about which we disagree.

On all these issues — common ownership, proportional representation, trade union legislation, nuclear weapons, the Alliance stance is the same. Their *minimum* position is that Labour must give in completely and then they will graciously allow us to carry out their policies. For parties which supposedly believe in coalition government, the Alliance have a funny approach to negotiations.

Philip Jones, Morden, Surrey

Liberal concern for democracy has been expressed mainly by calling, with every

justification, for a reform of the present electoral system. David Howarth should welcome and encourage the growing support for electoral reform within the Labour Party, based on the recognition that we have little or no chance of winning an outright majority at the next election; just as the Alliance must now recognise that they have little or no chance of replacing Labour as the main non-Tory party.

A Lib-Lab pact should not be based on any attempt to stitch up a long-term common front, but on a simple agreement for Labour to stand down in a sufficient number of seats for the Tories to lose their majority, to be followed by the introduction of PR or STV by a short caretaker government and then a new election, to be fought on distinct party programmes with subsequent bargaining over coalitions, as is the normal process in European democracies.

NS reader does it better

Howard Hughes, London N1

Please can we dispense with jobbing MPs and anyone else on the left who happens to own a TV set and occasionally turns it on to find out what the voters are watching.

Diane Abbott on *Neighbours* (NS 7 August): if it looks like *Crossroads* it might have something to do with Reg Watson (executive producer) who was producer on *Crossroads* from day one. That tricky little theme tune is written by none other than Tony Hatch, also responsible for the *Crossroads* theme tune. Jackie Trent, who wrote the lyrics, is Tony's wife. A nice little comment on the lack of opportunity in this country; 20 years of successful soap and they all go to Australia to re-make the same thing instead of coming up with something new here.

Hugo Williams' bemusement of some months back as to the sudden emergence of abbreviation in new TV comedy, i.e. Thatch for Thatcher exhibited on *Saturday Night Live* and previously *Filthy Rich & Catflap*, is not some trend, merely the product of a single mind: Ben Elton who scripted both shows.

The point, dear reader, is simply that a glance at the credits of most TV programmes is extremely informative and may remind us that, in spite of what we may think of them, these programmes are made by people.

Finally NS readers will be glad to know that *Neighbours* does in fact have its very own feminist in Daphne who wasn't in the episode that Diane watched but who, even as I type, is pointing out, with the help of Beth Travers, what a pain in the ass sexual harassment can be to Shane Ramsey.

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BACKCHAT

OUT TO LUNCH

Greener grass

Andrew Lumsden

ONE WENT (I see it was Princess Anne's birthday on 15 August, only a smidgeon after my own; now *that's* a woman who'd move her horses to the blue grass of Kentucky come the revolution and not give a damn . . .) As I was saying, one went to the launch party, or perhaps it should be the turve party, of a new lawn: a veridian expanse which David and Harry have laid shimmering where once, from the back of their Brixton home, the eye fell only on discarded prams, bent bike-wheels, rusted cans, bricks, weeds, cats.

Brixton, heart of the *barrio* — inner city, yipes, the sort of place *citoyen* Charles Mountbatten-Windsor wants tidied up, so his architects tell us, lest he lose his throne. The sort Mrs T glimpsed from the campaign trail in June, 'moving among the people', and directed must be corrupted promptly into the Conservative interest.

I don't know what either of them is talking about. The greatest Reform movement since the 1830s in the constituent regions of our fake 18th-century federalisation 'Britain' isn't going to be brought about by risings in the back streets. Cross professional persons will do it. They always do, saving the honoured memory of the Parisian *dames* who marched on Versailles.

First you get the high-falutin' about historical necessity or the Rights of Man (currently, about the Euro Convention and PR), then you get educated pillage of scrapheap institutions. At the lawn party — where, since it was a lazy Sunday and nearly everyone was in the newspaper biz, we got as drunk as Law Lords — there was much vague talk of somehow leaving the country.

Truly, not since I was in Israel during the Lebanon invasion atrocity have I known so many bright people of almost any politics ashamed of their country, glum, wishing out. If I wasn't so bloody nice I'd have precipitated flat-out Civil War myself only a few months ago. For reasons too improbable to go into I found myself logging,

in a wood (I seem to be getting out of doors a lot, probably the first hesitant step to exile), with a hereditary British aristo who is making a million pounds a year wages (wages? The word buckles) in Nigel Lawson's City of London. His nephew fetched me such a whack across the shin with one of the branches everyone was tidying away that the bone-hard lump lasted eight weeks. I hopped about Britishly, grinning and saying it was nothing; the kid after all was only knee-high to a Lamborghini, only trying to help.

The Lib-Lab Alliance would tell me I ought to have had a shot at suing the rich uncle for *in loco parentis* negligence. Sterner moralists, e.g. Cromwell, noting that uncle was making £1.90 gross a minute (and I mean gross) and I, an older and more useful man, was making 2p which has since sunk to 0.3p, would have told me to pick up the axe and lop off a couple of heads, nothing personal you understand, just to make a point.

'Prisoner at the bar, are you telling us that you bumped off an ornament of society and an innocent child simply because you don't stand to gain from tax-free inheritances, the City of London Casino, unrestricted export of capital, athletes' management companies, rock stars' overseas holding companies, take-over write-downs, the Duke of Cornwall's 50 per cent income tax ceiling, share-options, pension reliefs, and lifetime-gift allowances?'

'Well, yes, your honour. I hardly knew what came over me. Perhaps it was from watching TV . . .'

'Aha!'

' . . . because there was Jane Glover describing the archbish of Salzburg having his servants kick Mozart up the backside, and doesn't it make you angry even after two centuries? No? Oh. Anyway, your honour, I did just fleetingly wonder why *we'll* all have to be dead before anyone breathes an unkind word about the Saltzburgian *senescence dorée* of the state your honour is good enough to serve . . .'

'The prisoner will belt up! Sentenced to Brixton.'

I rather like Brixton. The rotted Inner City, to me, is the one Mrs T, Charles and my sometime co-lumberjack inhabit. □

FIRST PERSON

Beyond the Marbles

Naomi Mitchison

THE ELGIN MARBLES must certainly go back to Athens, as Christopher Hitchens' recent book (reviewed *NS* 7 August) explains. But that still leaves a number of problems.

Some concern the Marbles themselves. This vision of the world's first democracy ought to be seen for free, by as many people as possible, and although I trust that the projected museum in Athens will not have an entrance charge, and that more Greek citizens will be able to see their heritage, fewer of the rest of the world will.

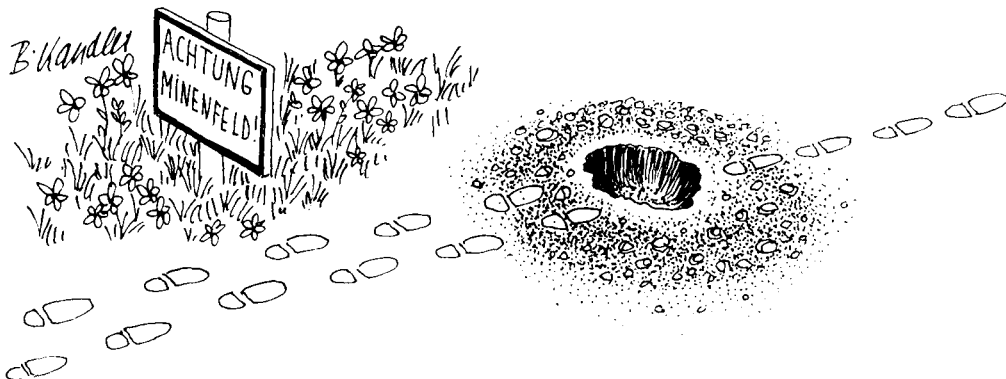
The option of returning the Marbles to the Parthenon itself is of course not practical, but even if a clean air policy could make Athens a better place, even if the Parthenon frieze could be put where it was, how like would it be to what Socrates saw? It must have been painted in colours which were probably like many in India: ochre or red for faces and bodies, black for hair and, most likely, blue for clothing and perhaps horses. Could that be tried out on the replica in the BM?

But there are problems beyond those of the Marbles. Consider Africa, especially that part which most attracted human greed: the Gold Coast. First it was slaving country, the blame for its horrors belonging both to those who bought and those who sold. That ended, but there was plenty of new bargaining. Gold, not only in ingots but in objects of art or religion, was exchanged for European goods, often totally valueless. And war was even more profitable. In the legendary capital of Ashanti, Kumasi, the streets were paved with imaginary gold — but the golden stool, the heart of the nation, was for real.

Occasional small wars with Ashanti in the first half of the 19th century were fuelled with gold, but so, above all, were the serious later ones, especially that from 1873 on. We British were of course spreading the gospel as well as attaching lucrative colonies to ourselves. The same with the French further along the Gold Coast. Our goodies no doubt included measles, smallpox and other even worse afflictions.

What happened to the gold? Many beautiful or interesting objects were no doubt melted down. The same thing happened in the ruins of Great Zimbabwe, where white colonists found nice pickings from King Solomon's mines — one couldn't expect those blacks to want anything to do with it. Thus, historical evidence disappears for ever.

The golden stool, the soul of the nation, did survive, although Sir Frederick Hodgson, Governor of the Gold Coast, was furious that it was not surrendered along with other symbolic golden objects. That meant further war; the stool was hidden, not found again until more amiable days. But all the time gold loot was likely to be seized on — where is it now? I was in Kumasi a few years back, watching the formal mourning dances that commemorated Wolsley's burning of



Kumasi, and meeting total friendliness. I was asked whether certain gold objects could be returned, above all those with ritual significance. I said there would have to be real security for them; the ancestors could protect them up to a point, but there could be those, even among the Ashanti, who no longer feared the ancestors. I — and I trust many others — hope that, if the safety question is solved, some at least of the looted gold could be returned to Kumasi.

But where is it? Not necessarily in museums. Perhaps in regimental mess collections or in private hands. Some may have gone abroad, probably to America. Lady Baden Powell restored some West African loot when she came to the celebrations when Ghana, first of the African countries, got independence. Good for her, but what about the rest? Can they be found and returned and be given a new safety?

The same thing happened in other African countries, though not always by British looters. In Australia, those worst-treated people of all ask for their ancestors' bones to be returned, only that. Surely we should have the common decency to return some things so long as we know that they will go back into loving, safe and permanent keeping. □

WINE

Top table

Stephen Brook

BUY A FRENCH *vin de table* or a German *Tafelwein* and you will, most likely, be paying a small sum for a drinkable but dull bottle. In Italy, on the other hand, a *vin da tavola* can be either rotgut or one of the country's finest wines.

Let me explain. When the Italian authorities, following the French example, laid down the rules of wine production, they did so with a heavy hand. Producers who wished, for example, to label their wine as Chianti Classico or Brunello had to fulfil strict conditions that dealt not only with vineyard location but with permitted grape varieties and length of ageing. This well meant attempt to ensure minimum standards of quality control has turned into a straitjacket, while other equally important factors (such as yields — the quantity of grapes that may be harvested per hectare) often go unchecked.

About ten years ago, a number of top producers thumbed their noses at the rules and began making

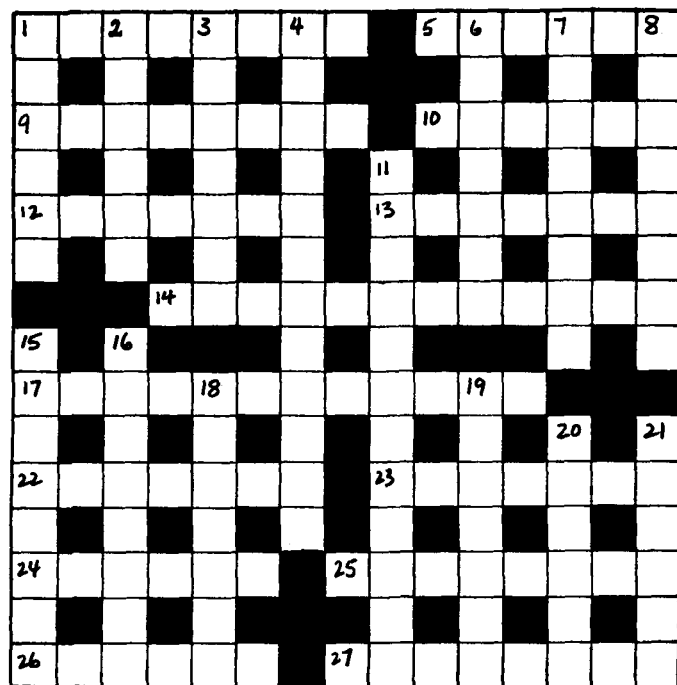
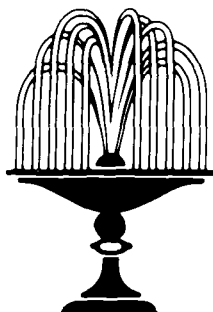
wine according to their own formulae. Such wines must be sold not as, say, Brunello or Chianti, but as plain *vin de tavola*. Some are made from 'forbidden' grape varieties, such as the Bordeaux staples of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot; others are aged, again claret-style, in small oak barrels (*barriques*) rather than in the traditional large casks.

Often made in small quantities, these are relatively pricy wines intended to bear comparison with the finest reds of France and California. Now that more and more of these 'designer' wines are coming onto the British market, it seemed timely to line them up and taste them blind and see whether they offer value for money.

First I looked at wines made primarily from Bordeaux grape varieties. I omitted the famous Sassicaia on grounds of cost, not quality. The two 1982 Venegazzu wines — white label (Waitrose, £4.75) and black label (Majestic, £9.75) — were disappointing, though the cheaper wine, a gutsy and powerful brew, is certainly good value. I preferred the more shy but attractive 1983 Castel San Michele from northern Italy (Oddbins, £5.95) and Lungarotti's ripe, earthy 1979 Cabernet Sauvignon di Miralduolo (Oddbins, £7.99). But the outstanding Cabernet blends were Tuscan: the

Weekend
Crossword 1568

Prizes: Copies of the *Collins Gem Crossword Dictionary* for the first ten correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1568, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ, by first post 7 September.



Name _____

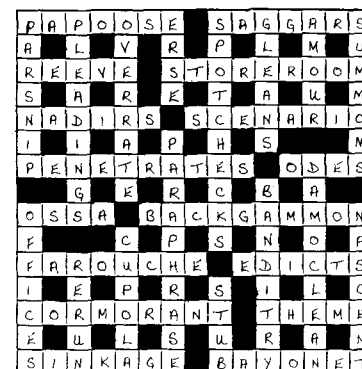
Address _____

ACROSS

1. Country place where endless body of troops goes back and surrounds another (8)
5. Lowers intellectuals into the water backwards (6)
9. Be louder in turn to intensify (8)
10. I go into a place used for fighting (6)
12. The brilliant little thing breaks a leg on the bridge (7)
13. Everything is possible for one who manages (7)
14. Changing mood singers right where they change (12)
17. They foretell the future but are caught with something fictitious at heart (12)
22. It is used in service to make one angry (7)
23. Playing about but treating a poet with gravity (7)
24. Previously found in a place where no wine is drunk (6)
25. Girl makes bachelor go back among strange allies (8)
26. People who discover foreign friend in a magazine (6)
27. Bit of speech occurring in scene changes without number (8)
8. Fit and well, for example, but my son is carved up by a doctor (8)
11. Take time and see clear when the vessel is wrecked (5,7)
15. Poor oriental gentleman has lost article (8)
16. Ground rice came as a different food (8)
18. Possess a bit of India left as a defensive error (3,4)
19. Common dish providing strange morsel (7)
20. Instrument for mixing oil in wine (6)
21. Related to a rich man who has lost his head (6)

SET SQUARE

Solution to 1566



Prizewinners to 1566

Mr D. Lewis
(London E3)

O. M. Parkinson
(Kingskerswell, Devon)

Tony Black
(Piddington, Northampton)

DOWN

1. Shady place turns softer (6)
2. Law officer includes the opening of the defence in his summing up (6)
3. Junior minister? (7)
4. Means of locomotion for fish in waves (12)
6. The footballer with a record is a reserve (7)
7. Being slovenly, has an accident with a tool (8)

1981 Ghiaie della Furba (Alex Findlater, £5.99) from the great Capezzana estate and the 1983 Tavernelle (about £8) from Villa Banfi. I haven't always been thrilled by Ghiaie, but the 1981 is now soft and rich, supple and elegant, and absolutely delicious. The Tavernelle is in a different style and could easily be mistaken for a Californian Cabernet. Minty, tannic and intense, it needs, as do most of the 1983 wines, a few more years in bottle.

The remaining batch of wines were all Tuscan. Some are from the Chianti region, others from Montalcino where the great Brunello is made. The basic grape variety is Sangiovese, though some of these wines include other varieties, including Cabernet. Almost all the wines are aged in *barriques*, of which a percentage will be new, in an attempt to give them a complexity and elegance not so easily attained by traditional Italian methods of ageing.

I ruled out the two single vineyard Monte Vertine wines: Pergole Torte is greatly overpriced at £16-plus and the less expensive Il Sodaccio (£12-plus) showed up poorly against cheaper wines of a comparable style. The celebrated Tignanello also now costs about £12, which seems excessive, though the wine is certainly very good. There were no poor wines in this group, though a few lacked the richness and complexity I look for at this price level. 1983 Brusco dei Barbi (about £5.50) had good acidity and some elegance but paled in comparison with other wines from the Montalcino region.

Two prestigious wines also proved somewhat disappointing: 1981 Cetinaia (H. Allen Smith, £9.60), a jammy, confectioned wine that my fellow tasters also found too sweet in style, and Castellare's 1983 I Sodi di dan Niccolo from the Chianti region (about £10.50), a sprightly wine of good concentration that somehow lacked flesh and weight. Another wine from the Chianti zone, Badia's 1980 Sangiovese (about £8.75), is big, tough and still austere, though it lost some harshness by the following day.

The best wines were all superb: rich, magnificently fruity, well balanced, with lovely length and complexity. Some, such as the 1983 Cepparello (Winecellars, £8.39) and the 1982 Coltassala (Winecellars, £8.95) need a few more years in bottle, but even now are quite delicious, tightly structured and very complex. Other wines, such as the 1983 Grifi from Avignonesi (about £9), which contains 20 per cent Cabernet, are more approachable. Grifi is charming and elegant, but the equally enjoyable 1981 Ser Niccolo from Serristori in Chianti is sumptuous and almost Californian in style. The 1983 Vinattieri (Bibendum, £8.95) is ripe and spicy, almost exotic and, despite its bizarre provenance, sensationally good. The winemakers have no vineyards of their own, but buy parcels of top-quality Tuscan wines and then age them in *barriques*. It sounds arbitrary, but the results are irresistible.

These are admittedly expensive wines, not for everyday tipping, but the best are very fine indeed. Produced in small quantities of around 1-2,000 cases, they are not easy to find, but worth searching out. Look out, too, for Altesino's outstanding Palazzo Altesini (about £7.50). Where I have not specified a source, consult Winecellars in Wandsworth, SW London (01-871 2668), who carry an unrivalled range of top Italian wines. □

Weekend competition

No 2989

What *else* could David Owen lead? Letters of application from the Doctor, please, for jobs you think might suit, outlining experience and aptitude. Max. 150 words, by Wednesday 2 September.

Set by Gray Dorn

No 2986

Speeches in his own defence from Oliver North in the *impossible* (legal dept: is that OK?) eventuality of his being accused by the popular press of having sex with a prostitute.

Set by Gray Dorn

Report

The curious thing is, it made no difference whether you had the dear Colonel denying that he'd ever laid eyes on a prostitute, or proudly — patriotically — admitting to having laid *everything*: in either case, you made the lad sound as though he were lying through his forage cap. Do you honestly think that was nice? The *real* Colonel North, as you must have seen perfectly clearly *each night on the television*, is a boy to bring tears to his sweet mother's eyes and a lump to her old, grey throat. I hate to say it, but it sounds to me as though you're just a weensy bit jealous. Ten pounds a head to the five sourpusses below.

By Rosie Hughes

'Sir, I cannot tell a lie. I did give money to Miss X, but not for the reason suggested. No, sir. I thought how happy my own life was with my dear wife, on whom I've never cheated, and my two little girls, who never want for leotards. Then I thought of this unfortunate woman and the poverty that has led her to a life of shame, and leaves her unable even to replace her shredded leotards. Sir, I was moved by compassion. I just wanted to help her a little, give her the chance to enjoy the holiday of a lifetime

in Iran, buy her new leotards. She too is an American citizen and is entitled to the same inalienable rights as you and I: life, leotards and the pursuit of happiness. Correction, sir. Liberty. My patriotic emotion made me stumble. Life, liberty and the pursuit of leotards.'

KEITH NORMAN

'Well, sir, I was leaving the office at 1.23am Eastern Standard Time when the lady approached and said, "Hey, soldier, you want to see something?" Naturally I thought she was a double agent for Iran or maybe someplace like Burundi. So we went somewhere quiet. I wanted to debrief her.'

'Strike the last sentence from the record. Continue, Colonel.'

'That was all, sir. It was strictly in the line of duty. Sir, I was in uniform: Ollie North would never besmirch that token of the American people's trust. Besides, it would be cheating on my best pal, my kids and my little dog. Nothing could make me do that. I have served my country's flag in strange faraway places, sir, and if ever I sin in my heart, a voice says, "Ollie, don't do it. Handle yourself like a man."'

'Strike the last sentence from the record. Continue, Colonel.'

NOEL PETTY

'If you think that I — married to a plucky little wife as fragrant and wholesome as apple-pie with homemade American ice cream, with a pure mother who brought me up to respect American womanhood and had the works of Whittier and Emerson on her dressing-table, with a little Quaker granny in her mob-cap rocking away in the porch, borders of honesty in her garden and lavender in her New England blanket chests, with a schoolmistress, Miss Emily Hobson, whom I called ma'am and who allowed no roughness and sniggering in her little log schoolhouse, no sirree, with a Commander in Chief who walks tall and is no Commie push-over, and with my solemn promise before the Stars and Stripes to serve America day and night — would pay good American dollars for an alley-hump with a toothless broad from Castro's Cuban gulag, then you must be a perverted foreign Marxist skunk who has never known the joy of pumpkin pie and turkey with genuine American cranberry sauce at Thanksgiving, God be my witness. Amen.'

GEORGE MOOR

'Sir, I want you to recognise that any transaction is sacred in the eyes of the Lord. There used to be a lot of guys going around who said I did a good job with the lady in question, and she was one of them. I did not engage in what is sometimes called "Congress" with this lady. I donated her seminal fluid in the hope that one of a new breed of Americans might be born to counter the Nicaraguan menace. She requested a sum of money to finance his education, and I sincerely complied. There was no other method of doing what I did. I used the conventional channel, and I covered myself up afterwards. I hope every upright American soldier would do the same, Sir.'

'But this woman ain't pregnant, Colonel.'

'No, Sir. She was not secure.'

'She leaked?'

'She leaked, Sir.'

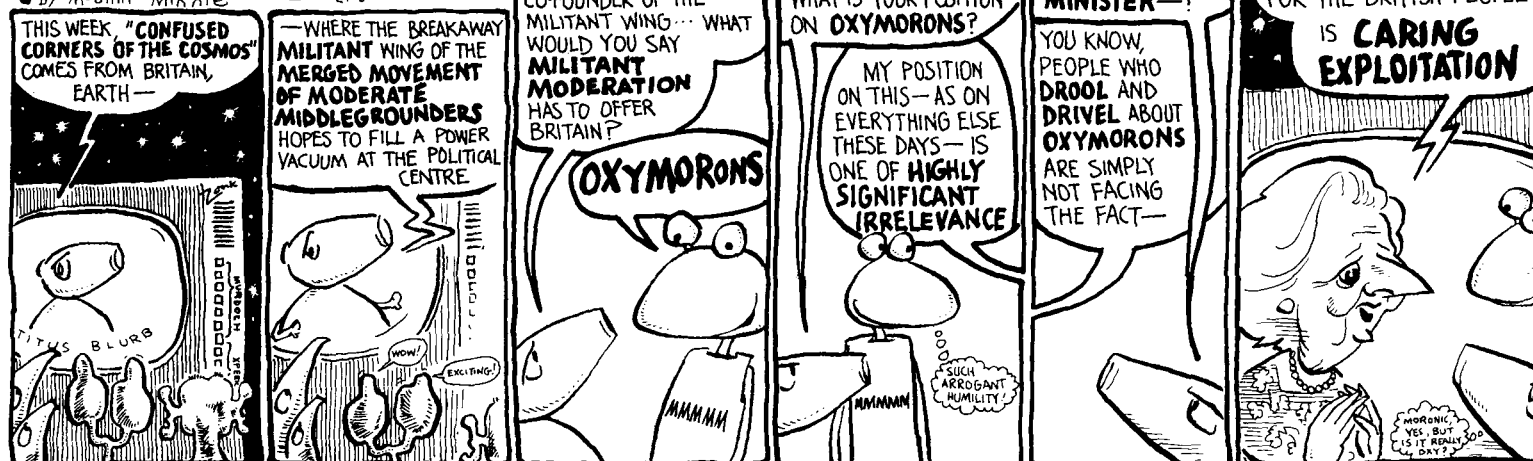
WILL BELLENGER

'It has been said that an American paid another American for a service in the market place. So let me say loud and clear that I love my country and no goddam Communist faggot is going to say that what made America great, the free exchange of services in a free market by free people, is something of which any man should be ashamed. Neither the grin on the face of the Russian bear nor the rabid bark of the mad dog of the Middle East will divert me from what I believe to be my duty, to make a firm, erect contribution to the economic lifeblood of my country. God bless America.'

NICHOLAS MURRAY



Take me to your Leader



Chess

IN THE LAST round of the Szirak Interzonal Portisch beat Velimirovic with Black to catch up with John Nunn and force a play-off for the third qualifying place. The two who went through without this further trial by ordeal were Hjartarsson (Iceland) and Salov (USSR). One of the features of this fiercely-contested tournament was the civil war between Salov and Beliavsky. They had tied for first place in this year's Soviet Championship, with Beliavsky winning a four-game play-off match. But this time Salov paid him back and his victory in their individual game made all the difference as to which of the two Russians reached the candidates' stage.

Ljubojevic (Yugoslavia) was one of the favourites to qualify. His summary defeat at Nunn's hands was one of the reasons why he was not in contention:

Ljubojevic-Nunn, Szirak 1987. Ruy Lopez, Marshall Countergambit.
 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 0-0 8. c3 d5 9. exd5 Nxd5 10. Nxe5 Nxe5 11. Rxe5 c6 12. d4 Bd6 13. Re2!?. Unlikely to be objectively superior to the older 13. Re1, but it introduces some fresh possibilities.
 Qh4 14. g3 Qh3 Short-Nunn, OHRA

1986 had gone 14... Qh5 15. Nd2 Bh3 16. f3 Be7 17. a4 b4 18. c4 Nf6 19. Ne4! with the main point that after 19... Qxf3 20. Ng5 Qh5 21. Nxf3 Qxf3 22. Bg5 White has a secure advantage. Nunn actually won that game, but only through a swindle near the time-control. 15. Nd2 Bf5 16. Be2 Bxc2 White is now weak on the light squares and his Queen loses contact with the King's defences. 17. Qxc2 f5 18. c4 Qg4 19. Re6 Nf4 20. Rxd6? A big mistake. I don't see anything better for Black after 20. f3 than a draw with... Nh3-f4 checks. Rae8! 21. cxb5 Re2! So soon and White is completely helpless. 22. Qc4 + Kh8 23. Qxe2 Nxe2 + 24. Kg2 f4! Nunn, who is fond of studies, composes one at the board: 25. f3 fxe3 26. fxe4 Rxf2 + and Rxh2 mate. 25. bxc6 fxe3 26. hxe3 Nf4 + 0-1.

Down in Swansea, Nigel Short looks well set to win the British Championship for the second time, and with a very big score too (8½/9 as I write this). An intriguing situation was the role-reversal that had Short, aged 22 and a GM with an international reputation, in the uncomfortable position of having nothing to gain but a red face if he got scalped by schoolboy Michael Adams. The spectators were buzzing with the idea that the former *enfant terrible* might lose to the 15-year-old, and your hearing wouldn't have to be too sharp to catch

whispers such as 'Now he knows what it feels like' coming from other players.

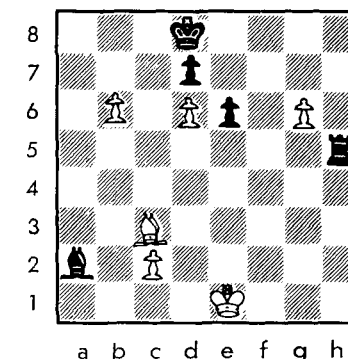
Adams-Short, Round 6. Ruy Lopez.

First 6 moves as above: 7. Bb3 d6 8. c3 0-0 9. h3 Nd7 10. d4 Bf6 Nigel doesn't normally play like this as Black. Probably he wanted to make sure that any preparation Adams had made against the French was wasted. 11. a4 Bb7 12. Na3?! Unfortunately he does not really threaten to capture twice on b5 — the Rook on a1 would hang. exd4 To pressurize e4, a square that the Knight on a3 has neglected. 13. cxd4 Re8 14. Qd2 Otherwise Black would have continued with... Na5 and... b4. As so often, one badly placed piece lets the whole side down. Re7 15. Be2 Qe8 16. b3 bxa4 17. bxa4 a5 18. Bb1 Nc5! Fearlessly played. The complications that follow look quite dangerous for Black, but he always has the last word. Short said that 19. Qe3, although it looks unattractive, was really White's best move. 19. e5 dxe5 20. Qc2 The answer to 20. dxc5 is also 20... e4. e4 21. Bg5 Bxg5 22. Nxg5 Nd3 23. Rxe4 Rxe4 Since 24. Nxe4 Ncb4 wins a whole piece for Black, White has to give up the exchange. 24. Qxd3 Re1 + 25. Kh2 g6 26. Ba2 Re7 27. Re1 Nd8 With time running short Adams is playing for a swindle, which is indeed all he can play for. 27... Nb4 is winning quickly here, but in such

situations the safe play is to defend everything. 28. Rb1 Qc6 29. d5 Qd6 + 30. Kg1 Qf4 31. h4 Qxh4 32. Qd2 Ba6 33. Nb5 Bxb5 34. Rxb5 Qxa4 35. Rb3 Ra6 36. Rb8 Rd6 37. Ra8 Qb4 38. Qxb4 axb4 39. f3 Kg7 40. Ne4 b3 A little tactic to untangle his pieces. If now 41. Nxd6 bxa3 42. Ne4 f5 and the White Knight dare not move for fear of... Re1 +. 41. Bxb3 Rb6 42. Ba4 Nb7 43. Bc6 Nd6 The time-scrabble is over and Black has consolidated his material advantage, so 0-1.

Problem

White to play and win (by A. Maksimovskich, 1972).



George Botterill

This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed.
 (Postcards please.)

□ The East End is now a tourist resort. A magazine is running a competition with the prize of a weekend break in a London hotel and the chance to 'see the real-life pub, launderette and the square on which the *EastEnders* TV set is modelled'. — *The Times* (Liselotte Leschke)

□ My latest gem from British Telecom was a letter telling me my phone was now OK — they had to write, they said, because they couldn't get through on the phone. — *Observer* (R. L. Hunt)

□ Sadly many villagers doubt whether Brooke would appreciate modern Granchester — a terraced house with solar panels, a weedless lawn, a spotless Porsche; the village school has been converted into an up-market house. The Rose and Crown has been tarted up and called the Rupert Brooke. Among its gastronomic delights are 'Brookeburgers' at £2.85. — *Daily Telegraph* (Derek Morgan)

□ It was a question of standards the mayor explained. 'I represent the Crown and the authority, and they should be properly dressed. If you want to play golf, as I do, you can wear an open-necked shirt. But if you go into the golf club after seven o'clock you should be properly dressed. It's perfectly clear.' — *The Independent* (Bill Linskey)

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Samson. Not as strong as you might expect.



SM 011

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Health Departments' Chief Medical Officers